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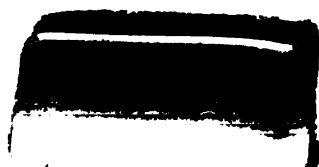
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IN THE LANDS OF THE SUN

1999
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William
Prince of Sweden

TO THE
ALBION
Prince William of Sweden.

IN THE LANDS OF THE SUN

**NOTES AND MEMORIES OF A
TOUR IN THE EAST**

BY

H.R.H. PRINCE WILLIAM OF SWEDEN

WITH THIRTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS

AND

A PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR

**LONDON
EVELEIGH NASH**

1915

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DEDICATED TO
MY TRAVELLING COMPANIONS
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

493822

TO THE READER

THERE was once a man who on being asked if he could play the fiddle, replied : " I don't know ; I have never tried." I should like to apply the same words, in a slightly altered form, to myself : Can you write a book?—Don't know ; have never tried. But an old saying tells us that fortune favours the bold, and thanks to resolute pressure on the part of friends and acquaintances I allowed myself to be prevailed upon, in one of those weak moments which are never rare in human life. How far I have succeeded is another question, which the reader himself must decide.

It is, however, with great hesitation that I commit my papers to the press. In the first place, so many excellent books of travel are already in existence, which contain descriptions of a far more interesting character than my own. In the second place, just as it is easy to write a monotonous diary, full of dry facts and insignificant data, so it is difficult to put life into the dead words, colour and feeling into the pictures, that they may give pleasure to a wider circle of readers, and not merely to those who perhaps wish now and then to refresh their memories of bygone travels and wanderings. And a dull book of travel is one of those literary productions that I only recommend to my enemies.

The following book is based chiefly on notes made during a journey in the East in the autumn of 1911 and the spring of 1912. While some of them were written at a civilised writing-table, at least an equal number were jotted down on the edge of a bed or on my knee far out in the jungle. Fugitive moods, external impressions, and here and there brief reports of interesting conversations jostle each other in pleasing confusion, so that my work has really consisted in arranging the materials, comparing and studying accessible authorities and giving the whole a more finished form.

I must, however, solicit in advance the reader's kind indulgence with the errors and imperfections which will no doubt be found here and there, and thus I leave these recollections in the hands of the public. The book is far from being a "standard" work, but if perchance it should arouse in any one a desire to study the civilisation and the peoples of the East more closely, it will have fulfilled its object.

But to you, dear reader, I will give a final and well-meant piece of advice—if you find this work dull, for goodness' sake do not allow a mis-directed ambition to keep you at it up to the last page, but close it where you please and put it back on the shelf. I have no wish to make myself your enemy.

THE AUTHOR.

STOCKHOLM.

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IN THE LANDS OF THE SUN

CHAPTER I

ON BOARD THE S.S. *KLEIST*

WITH a rattling and clattering of chains, a puffing and shrieking of steam, a bubbling and hissing of the muddy water, a cheering and waving and sobbing on deck and on land, the great steamer put out from the stone pier in the harbour of Genoa. "Auf wiedersehen!" "Good-bye!" "Au revoir!" sounded in at least half a dozen of the world's languages, and even after the outlines of the town had begun to fade into bluish black shadows, some of the more persistent of the passengers still stood on the poop with their white handkerchiefs, alternately wiping a tear from their eyes and waving a last farewell to good old Europe. It was true enough that twenty-four hours later the *Kleist* would call at Naples, but, as the quarantine regulations were strict, it was extremely unlikely that any communication with the shore would be allowed. So that it was best, while one was about

is to get over the bitter moments and sentimentality of parting at once, and then be able to devote oneself undisturbed to the charm and enjoyment of the sea voyage.

For there could be no question of anything else. From a cloudless sky a pale November sun showered its glittering cascades of gold over the eternally blue surface of the Mediterranean, which, after being ruffled at first by a cool northerly breeze, gradually sank to rest like a boundless, unbroken, gleaming mirror. The pale phantom of sea-sickness was exorcised from the very beginning of the voyage, nor did it ever afterwards have a chance of appearing on board. The deities of the weather, who are usually known for their capriciousness and uncertainty, showed us their most flattering attention all the way to Singapore; and if sometimes the swell came rolling in its monotonous and drowsy swing, it gave the *Kleist* a chance of proving herself a first-class sea boat with an easy motion that was scarcely noticeable even by the most sensitive passengers. (*N.B.*—This may be vouched for even by those who are not sailors!)

So the voyage to the Orient had begun.

The Orient; what charm dwells in that word! What unsuspected visions it opens out to the mind! What secrets it conceals among its legends of immemorial age! It makes one think, almost

involuntarily, of immense treasures, of unparalleled magnificence, of warm, moonlit nights with insidious shadows, and of dangers lurking on every hand. Jewels and flashing gems, bright weapons and cups of poison. Love, hatred, and revenge.

There were no legends I loved more as a child than those of the Orient, nothing that could make my youthful imagination create more grotesque and extravagant forms. The heroes of the *Thousand and One Nights* long remained my ideal, and their surroundings were to me an inaccessible earthly paradise. That is a long time ago, and now I suppose I should hardly prize the book as I did then; but the longing for the Orient, with which it inspired me, still remains, burning with undiminished fire and enticing with the same charm and mystery. And it will continue to do so even in the future, in spite of the fact that I have now been there and observed both its bright and its shady sides, not merely through the coloured glass of romance, but also through the clear and accurate lens of realism.

We were thus on our way to the Orient, and our immediate goal was Siam. The voyage had been decided on and planned in all haste after a visit of the Siamese heir apparent, Prince Chakrabongs, to Stockholm in September. When I returned at that time, sunburnt and

weather-beaten after about five months' refreshing life on a torpedo-boat in the Swedish archipelago, I was met the very same day by an inquiry whether my wife and I would be willing to go to Siam and be present at the new King's coronation, which was expected to take place at the beginning of December. There could of course be only one answer, and a month later we left Stockholm, in order on behalf of H.M. the King, to represent Sweden at the forthcoming ceremonies in Bangkok.

It was quite a little colony of Swedes that joined our party on board with the same immediate object in view—the Coronation at Bangkok. Besides Miss A. Hamilton, maid of honour, Mr. Secretary Hultgren, Chamberlain Bildt, Counsellor of Legation, Chamberlain N. Rudebeck, and Lieutenant von Heidenstam, who formed part of the official mission, the party was composed of Count G. Lewenhaupt (who has since been my inseparable friend and companion on all shooting expeditions abroad); Captain and Mrs. Schneider, the former of whom had been appointed "adviser" to the Siamese navy for a year; Count Gyldenstolpe and Mr Högbom, the former to undertake zoological and the latter geological research in the little-known interior of the country; and finally the Consul of Siam in Stockholm, Mr. Helge A. Johnson, travelling

officially. We were thus no fewer than thirteen souls—a fatal number, which, however, did not bring the least misfortune—and it need scarcely be said that this colony kept together in a coterie during the whole voyage to the capital of Siam.

The first few days on board were occupied in settling down and making acquaintances.

“*Kleist*, Norddeutscher Lloyd, Bremen” was displayed in big letters wherever one turned, clearly proclaiming the vessel’s nationality and port. The smallest article was stamped with this name or with the abbreviation, “N. Ll. Br.,” and one almost expected to see the passengers walking up and down with similar initials on their backs. Meanwhile the *Kleist* proved to be a vessel of about 9000 tons, one of the newer ships of the Company’s East Asiatic line, but far from the largest. The fittings were substantial, simple, and without luxury; the cabins small, usually intended for two persons, but remarkably inconvenient in their arrangement—at any rate to a sailor’s eye.

One day I had the opportunity of making an interesting and thorough examination of the whole vessel under the guidance of Captain Maas. She was trim and well kept, and the order and discipline we have learnt to expect from *das grosse Vaterland* were everywhere in evidence.

The crew consisted chiefly of Europeans, but a number of firemen, cooks, and stewards were Chinese. What struck me most was the neatness and comfortable appearance of the third-class passengers' quarters: lofty, light, roomy, and well ventilated. There were no fewer than five kitchens on board, and their arrangement would certainly have been passed with honours by the most critical of housewives. In the cold rooms, where all provisions were stored, the temperature was kept between 32° and 36° Fahrenheit. When the weather was particularly warm (in the Red Sea), the coolness of these chambers was so intensely felt that it involuntarily took one's thoughts to the neighbourhood of the North Pole. The ice-supply is made up in Genoa and then usually lasts until the first port in Japan is reached. One would have thought that a boat like this would carry freezing apparatus, but this is not the case. The captain confided to me that it is much cheaper in the long-run to buy ice in Japan than to make it themselves on board. Another instance of Japanese cheapness!

In this connection it may perhaps be of interest to give the *Kleist's* time-table for this voyage—and I use the word time-table advisedly, for these steamers come and go with a regularity that is simply admirable and approaches the punctuality of an express train.

PORT.	ARRIVAL.	DEPARTURE.
Bremen		Oct. 18
Rotterdam	Oct. 19	" 19
Antwerp	" 20	" 23
Southampton	" 24	" 24
Gibraltar	" 28	" 28
Algiers	" 29	" 29
Genoa	" 31	Nov. 2
Naples	Nov. 3	" 3
Port Said	" 7	" 7
Suez	" 8	" 8
Aden	" 12	" 12
Colombo	" 19	" 19
Penang	" 23	" 23
Singapore	" 25	" 25
Hong-Kong	" 30	" 30
Shanghai	Dec. 4	Dec. 6
Nagasaki	" 7	" 7
Kobe	" 9	" 9
Yokohama	" 11	" 16
Back in Hamburg	Feb. 4 next year.	

When I examined these dates for the first time, I thought, not without a shudder—How shall I get through the time between November 2 and 25? More than three weeks' unbroken voyage on the same boat! But these misgivings soon vanished. It was quite extraordinary how the time flew by; before we knew anything about it—we had arrived. Two things contributed to this; first, the regular routine on board, according to the following programme:—

Breakfast	8-10 a.m.
Bouillon and sandwich on deck	11.30 "
Lunch	1 p.m.
Tea	4 "
Dinner	7 "
Sandwiches	10 "

and, secondly, the number of different amusements that filled our "leisure" hours, such as games, sports, dancing, music, reading, and bridge.

The sports—in which the Swedish colony, presumably in anticipation of coming victories in the 1912 Olympiad, carried off most of the prizes—were particularly successful; they lasted three days and contributed to the formation of new acquaintances. By the time they were over, one knew all one's fellow-passengers. And indeed they formed a collection as interesting psychologically as it was varied in its origin. German naval officers, who were taking out a detachment of sailors to the warships stationed in the Far East. Tea, sugar, teak, and rubber merchants of all nationalities. Ladies of the best society on their way to the Delhi Durbar. The American multi-millionaire, who only travels for the sake of travelling. Two religious old maids, who studied the Bible, Baedeker, and Dickens by turns. A Swiss Jew, usually rather tipsy, and therefore unanimously christened Bacchus by his kind fellow-passengers. An Indian princess, amiable and pleasant, but bitten by the suffragette movement in England; she always appeared in shawls, blouses, ties, brooches, etc., in the international colours of "Votes for Women," green, white, and purple. German, English, French, and Dutch colonial officials. A learned Chinaman in big blue

spectacles. The inevitable South American adventurer whom one meets always sooner or later on one's travels. An old, white-haired couple, who sat all day long holding each other's hands, just as if they were on their honeymoon. Young German and American girls, always ready to dance. The hopeful young artist who sees the world in *couleur de rose*, and many more.

The first hint of Siam reached us even among this motley crowd, in the form of the English Chief of Police at Bangkok, who was returning from his leave to see that all went well during the Coronation. He was accompanied by his little Siamese adopted son, Nai Boon Tor, a lively and intelligent boy of twelve, who soon became the favourite of all.

Talking of children, there were a good many of these on board, usually accompanied by Chinese male or female nurses. One of the latter, a buxom old Chinese woman, made her living entirely by taking other people's children to and from the East. This was the twenty-third voyage she had made.

It would be a pity not to say a few words about the fancy dress ball which concluded the sports and formed their chief attraction. One side of the promenade deck was screened off for the occasion, long rows of coloured electric lamps hung from the roof, and at one end the band took

up a position and discoursed the most languishing waltzes and sparkling two-steps over the mirror-like surface of the Indian Ocean. Under the lights a motley confusion of people swayed in the rhythm of the dance, arrayed in the most wonderful costumes an inventive fancy and the deft fingers of the sailors had been able to produce from the small resources available. The facts that the wigs were made of tow, the costumes run together of bunting and tissue-paper—there were some really tasteful exceptions, of course—or that the perspiration ran in streams and everybody's face resembled a bright full moon—the temperature was 86°—by no means acted as a damper on our spirits, but rather contributed to the lively humour that prevailed from the beginning. And the tropical night was far spent before silence returned to the ship.

On the following day the same entertainment was repeated for the second-class passengers.

With the passing of Port Said one may say that the frontier of the Orient has been crossed. Here we are met by the first warm breezes from burning deserts, here one steps for the first time into the swarming, many-coloured Eastern crowd, and hears the first half-begging, half-insolent cry of "Backshish, sir," while thin, brown hands are stretched before the strolling tourist. And here, finally, one crosses the broad threshold between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, the

threshold that French engineers more than forty years ago turned into a highway—the Suez Canal. In the year 1869 representatives of the whole civilised world met together to take part, under the auspices of the Khedive Ismail, in the brilliant festivities that marked the opening of the Canal, and to listen for the first time to the notes of Verdi's now well-known opera *Aida*, composed for this historic occasion. The gigantic undertaking had taken about ten years, and had cost in round figures nineteen and a half millions sterling. The cost of upkeep at the present time still amounts to about £1,400,000 a year, but in spite of this it is not a bad speculation, as is shown by the fact that last year the Canal dues brought in no less than £5,388,000. The *Kleist* alone cost £2500 to take through on this voyage, and from this it may be understood that the figures mount up to fabulous sums. And Lord Beaconsfield assuredly knew what he was about, when a few years after its opening he transferred the control of the majority of shares by an adroit financial manœuvre from French to English hands.

The entrance to the Canal is graced by the statue of its originator, Ferdinand de Lesseps, indicating his master-work with a discreet gesture of the hand ; and following his indication we glided—after a few hours' stay at Port Said—into the broad ditch.

It was evening. Above us shone a gleaming

full moon, and we ourselves lit up the banks with the big search-light in the bows, a precaution which must be observed by all steamers going through. Now and then one could distinguish the dark shadow of some camel moving slowly along the bank, or hear the distant howl of predatory jackals. But otherwise all was silent as the grave, sterile, dead, and desolate.

When I awoke next morning we were just entering the Bitter Lakes, a series of broad but shallow sheets of water, the banks of which exhibit a remarkably rich bird fauna. Through my port-hole I could see long rows of storks, herons, flamingos, and other waders, standing in the shallow water like coral-beads on a thread.

Soon we were back again in the Canal proper, with sand and nothing but sand on every side. The monotonous desert stretches as far as the eye can see, and is only broken on the horizon by the blue mountains of Egypt or the Sinai Peninsula. The only green spots in this infinite mass of sand are the palms round the huts of the Canal watchmen.

It took us no less than nineteen hours to traverse the hundred miles that separate Port Said from Suez, on account of the numerous stoppages we had to make, to let other steamers pass in the opposite direction. The Canal is deep enough, but so narrow that large vessels cannot pass unless one of them stops by the bank, and there are

certain fixed places for passing. The maximum time is twenty, and the minimum fourteen hours.

And now the *Kleist* was steaming southward through the Red Sea. On both sides we saw the outline of rugged, desolate mountains which glowed in the marvellous sunsets, in colours ranging from the most splendid crimson and purple to the softest violet and greyish blue. On the port side the land towered up higher and higher, and assumed more and more gigantic and fantastic formations, until finally the holy mountain of Sinai stood before us like a threatening giant, full of majesty but with the mark of desolation upon its brow. The harsh words "Thou shalt not" once sounded amid lightning-flashes from its summit, not as the fertilising gospel of love, but as the sterile commandment of immutable justice. And as these commandments were grudging and strict, so does the place where they were given, Sinai, remain to this day arid and desolate, with scarcely a human habitation on its torn and rocky sides, and without a single green spot to refresh the eye among all the wastes of yellow sand and outcrops of reddish rock.

On the map of the world the Red Sea looks extremely long and narrow, giving one the idea that its width is something like that of the Straits of Dover or the Danish Belt. In reality its waters are considerably wider—so wide, in fact, that land can only be seen on both sides for the first day, and even then it often disappears in a quivering

haze. Farther south one might imagine oneself on the ocean, as no rugged outlines of land there disturb the monotony of sea and sky. All that one sees is a few bare rocky islands, which here and there appear on the horizon and soon vanish again astern of the hurrying steamer. Some of them lie almost in the middle of the fairway, thrown there, as it seems, at haphazard. This time it cannot be denied that they caused us some little trouble and anxiety. For these rocks are under the dominion of Turkey, and on account of the war then in progress between that country and Italy all light-houses were extinguished, to the great disadvantage of navigation and with very doubtful advantage to the belligerent nation responsible.

Thanks to good compasses and sure navigation we nevertheless found ourselves a few days later in the anchorage of Aden.

This town, or rather this hole, I would advise every one to avoid as far as possible. It gives one a hopeless impression with its naked rock and burning sun. No vegetation is to be discovered, but one must not expect too much of a place that has not enjoyed a drop of rain for eight years! The only sights the town has to offer are some big tanks for collecting rain-water, cut out of the rock and constructed, according to the legend, by no less a person than King Solomon himself. It is also said that Paradise (Eden) was situated here; if

this was so, one must hope, for the sake of Adam and Eve, that the climate has changed since then. For no one can remember to have heard, even by tradition, that the said tanks were ever more than quarter full at the most.

Surrounded by thousands of kites, which in these regions take the place of the crows and gulls at home, we were glad to leave inhospitable Aden behind us the same evening and set our course for Colombo. After six days' voyage across the Indian Ocean, calm at this time of year, the lofty blue outlines of Cape Comorin, the southernmost point of India, appeared above the horizon, and soon after we lay moored to the quay at Colombo. For twelve hours we again had the chance of feeling solid ground under our feet, glad to get away from the coal-dust on board, as the boat here filled her bunkers to the brim.

I shall never forget my first impression of this town, its glowing sun, its pulsating life, its wealth of colour, its palms with their luxuriant verdure and cooling shade. Here at last I was in the genuine Orient.

A motor-car took us through the town to Mount Lavinia, a European hotel situated on the most delightful sandy beach. But the road to it, how picturesque it was! On both sides rose the slender stems of the palms with their bending plumes of green leaves—areca palms, fan

palms, coco-nut palms, talipot palms, or whatever their names were. In their shade we had a glimpse of one after another of the neat little huts of the natives, where one could sometimes see the most idyllic family scenes enacted. Here was a woman, naked to the middle, giving the breast to her stark-naked little offspring; and by her side the rest of the younger generation sprawled in the loose sand in a lively game that filled the air with clouds of dust. Here was a barber shaving his customers in the middle of the street, or with a preoccupied expression picking the fleas from the bushy hair of some of his more intimate acquaintance. Here a coquettish beauty, draped only in her motley *sarong*, was making her toilet in the open doorway before a bit of old broken looking-glass. But along the road a varied multitude moved hither and thither, walking and driving—Tamils, Singhalese, Indians, and Chinese—all in bright and showy costumes, simple in material but rich in charm. And everywhere the natty little rickshaws hurried through the crowd, drawn by muscular, perspiring coolies, who made the pedestrians get out of the way with loud cries and tinkling bells.

And when later we sat on the open terrace in front of the little hotel in a gorgeous sunset, with the rose-coloured sea at our feet and the palm-trees of the beach outlining their graceful forms against a green and purple sky, one could

really believe oneself transported for a moment—however short—to the beautiful domain of the first Paradise. And no doubt the serpent was there too—though for the moment he was not visible.

Then we returned to the town, this time through extensive cinnamon gardens and rubber plantations, which in the uncertain light gave the effect of immense labyrinths.

After far too short a day on this glorious island—which, however, we hoped to see more of on our homeward voyage—we were soon on the open sea again, bound for the East—always for the East.

The air became moister and moister every day as we nearer the Straits of Malacca. Even in the morning one's clothes were so wet that they could be wrung out, and they certainly did not get drier in the course of the day. Everything stuck to one, and the tobacco was more like a wet dough than any sort of delectable narcotic. In the neighbourhood of Sumatra the humidity reached its climax and was precipitated in the form of pouring rain, which completely washed out the last hope of having a dry thread on one's back—at any rate before Singapore.

CHAPTER II

ARRIVAL AT BANGKOK

ON November 25, after exactly three weeks on board, we left the good ship *Kleist*, which had faithfully carried us all the way from Genoa, and betook ourselves to the King of Siam's yacht, *Mahachakreri*, which was lying at anchor in the outer roads of the excellent harbour of Singapore. This was the beginning of the more interesting and exotic part of the voyage, and it was not without a certain excited anticipation that we ascended the white vessel's broad gangway-ladder.

We saw here for the first time our Siamese gentlemen-in-waiting, drawn up in a long row and looking at first glance as like each other as peas. They were in full dress, the officers in grey uniform and the courtiers in blue tail-coats, buttoned up to the throat, white breeches and white stockings. In addition, they were all bespangled with orders and amulets, medals and stars—every scrap of room on their chests was occupied.

But I had better begin by introducing our new friends in a few words.

They proved to be four in number (the long row that received us was partly composed of other gentlemen, who were appointed to wait on Princess Alice of Teck—for the Princess was also on board the yacht ; the Prince had embarked on a British cruiser).

Phya Mahibal, titular Chamberlain and Governor of one of the provinces in the Malay Peninsula. A man of about forty, with bright and lively eyes, a great sportsman and a member of the progressive party in Siam. He was a gentleman to his finger-tips, a type and model of the Siamese aristocracy. He possessed a peculiarly amiable and sympathetic character, and it was with genuine regret that we shook hands with him for the last time six weeks later.

Phra Visutr, Gentleman-in-waiting to the King, a tall, well-proportioned, and broad-shouldered Siamese, whose exterior inspired confidence. There was in his face something of the faithful St. Bernard, but his eyes twinkled with native humour, which often found an outlet in the course of our long conversations. A great judge of horses and a daring rider.

Phya Sri Suriyapaha, one of the King's former favourites. He had charge of our household during the whole stay in Bangkok. Without question the liveliest of the four, his whole energy was devoted to making us as comfortable as possible. Nothing was wanting ; he had

carte blanche from the King to do as he thought best, and it may easily be understood that everything was first-rate. He was so obliging and polite that I really expected to see him walk behind and to the left of his own shadow.

Luang Biddhayudh was a soldier, and the most taciturn of the quartet. While the three others spoke fluent English, he could only express himself in a few not very comprehensible words of German. This was the more remarkable, as he had spent six years in Germany for the sake of his studies, two of which had been passed with a regiment in the neighbourhood of Berlin. How he had got on with his service in *das grosse Vaterland* is a mystery to me; perhaps his professional enthusiasm made up for his linguistic deficiencies. Or perhaps he chewed betel on the sly, and was therefore unwilling to open his mouth.

Such, then, were the men whom providence—or rather the King of Siam—had placed in our path. No doubt they seemed rather tame and impossible to start with, but when one had got to know them a little, and they on their part had found out that we were no such terrible potentates who cut off heads right and left, and would flatter them one day and present them with a red silken cord the next, our mutual confidence increased and soon developed into genuine friendship.

But let us return to the *Mahachakreri*. She

is not altogether a stranger to Swedes, for one fine summer day of 1897 the red flag of Siam with its great white elephant waved from her stern in the waters of Stockholm, and on board her was the father of the King we were now about to crown. A number of the ports of Norrland were also visited during that trip, and a chart of Sweden was still hanging on the wall of my cabin with the route marked. That Gefle had changed places with Härnösand and Umeå with Luleå in no way detracted from its historical value.

Her fittings, by the way, were rather old-fashioned; twenty years ago they had been regarded as tip-top. But this is of minor importance in a climate where one can stay on deck both night and day.

The boat was commanded by a Danish captain, the first officer was an Austrian, and the second a Norwegian, which left nothing to be desired in the way of cosmopolitanism. These three officers had under them a Siamese crew of no less than 240 men—a most unusual proportion.

With the exception of a few small gunboats and torpedo-boats, the *Mahachakreri* represents the whole modern fleet of Siam, and combines in herself the qualities of cruiser, training-ship, and royal yacht. For there were six small guns to be seen on board; but for the last ten years they seem only to have been used for firing salutes.

In company with the British cruiser *Astrea* we

then put to sea in the afternoon. The weather was the best that could be imagined, but, alas! in the evening it began to blow, and when I woke next morning the vessel was swinging madly; it was quite difficult to keep one's feet. At first I could see no reason for this violent rolling, as the wind had nothing like the force of a gale and there was only a moderate sea from the south-east. But the explanation was—as I afterwards learned—that the *Mahachakreri*, in spite of her 3000 tons, draws scarcely 12 feet of water, in order to be able to cross the sandy bar at the mouth of the Menam. And even a child could not expect such a vessel to be a good sea boat.

Sea-sickness made great ravages in the course of the day, and the casualties were terrible, especially among the Siamese. In spite of the dark colour of their skins, one could see the green peeping out here and there. However, round the dinner-table that evening were assembled all six Swedish males,¹ but only two Siamese, who were very soon reduced to one (and barely that).

After three days' knocking about, the Siamese coast came in sight at last, and on the morning of the fourth day we passed the shallow sandbanks off the mouth of the river Menam.

Here there was a swarm of fishing-boats, sampans, and larger sailing vessels, very picturesque

¹ The rest of the colony had taken the ordinary passenger boat from Singapore to Bangkok.

and reminding one of Chinese junks, with an immense patched and tanned sprit-sail or square-sail. Regular palisades and labyrinths of fishing-tackle were sticking up everywhere in the water, and it was evident that fishing was here an important and productive industry, as it is round the whole coast, and on the numerous rivers and canals.

In a short time we were in the river itself.

At first the banks were bordered by luxuriant jungle vegetation: palms, bananas, shrub-plants, and grass as high as a man literally fought for room near the water. But then by degrees this primeval forest gave way to more civilised districts. Here and there the white spire of a pagoda or the elegant lines of a temple rose above the verdure, while at the same time the view became more extensive and one cultivated field after another came in sight. At a bend of the river we suddenly had before us the beautiful old temple Wat Phra Chedi, situated on an island and reflecting its handsome outlines, as far as the muddiness of the stream permitted, on the surrounding waters.

The little bamboo huts, which at first had been rare among the ubiquitous foliage, now became more numerous, increased both in size and comfort, and in places were collected together into picturesque villages. About fifty per cent. of these villages, however, consisted of floating dwellings: a little wattled bamboo house erected on a raft or boat-like craft. These floating houses are to be found

everywhere in Siam, on canals, rivers, and lakes, and I do not think it is any exaggeration to say that about one-tenth of the whole population of the country is born, lives, and dies on the water. The children here can very often swim before they can walk.

The river became constantly narrower, the houses stood closer along the banks, and the floating dwellings were more numerous in the river itself, often lying three or four deep, so that the line of the bank was entirely hidden. Rice-mills and saw-mills raised their blackened chimneys against the sunny sky, palaces of white stone dazzled the eye in the brilliant light, the monumental pagoda of Wat Cheng came nearer and nearer, and between lines of small saluting gunboats the *Mahachakrkeri* made an elegant circle in the narrow channel, and shortly afterwards lay moored to her red buoys off the royal palace. After exactly a month's voyage we had at last reached our destination, Bangkok.

Hardly was the work of mooring completed when the Siamese State barge, which was to take us ashore, lay waiting at the gangway-ladder.

This was an extremely original and handsome craft. In shape it resembled a very long and narrow canoe, with high stem and stern, the former carved like a great dragon's head, and the latter like a curling, scaly tail, and both gilt. The sides were also decorated with carvings, alternately gilt and painted in showy colours. In

the centre of the boat was a sort of platform with a carved roof, from the sides of which hung heavy draperies of gold brocade as a protection against the rays of the sun. Sixty rowers in blood-red costumes and pointed caps handled short, broad-bladed oars. Right aft stood the commander, like an old viking on his dragon ship, and guided the boat with great skill by means of a long steering-oar. He also gave the time to the rowers, in the following way. First a long-drawn nasal cry—and then every oar entered the water at the same instant, just as if one had pulled a string. After a strong stroke all the oars went straight up in the air, while the rowers answered with a sharp, ringing “Chau!” Then they all imitated the quacking of a wild duck common in Siam.¹ A fresh cry from the commander, the noise ceased and the next stroke began. The whole thing had a curious effect, and one could imagine oneself transported some fifty years back to the time when barbarism still reigned supreme in the country.

In this way we were rowed ashore to the royal landing-place outside the walls of the palace. Here appeared the cause of our long journey—the Heir to the Throne—together with dignitaries and the little Swedish colony. The latter consisted, properly speaking, of a single representative—an old fellow-cadet of mine, W. L. Grut, formerly

¹ An ancient custom, designed to scare the enemy.

naval lieutenant. This countryman of ours, now Director of the Siam Electricity Company, has made for himself, by hard work and indomitable energy, a leading position in European circles in Bangkok, and seldom have Swedish qualities been more worthily represented in the Far East than by him. A guard of honour of small but remarkably smart-looking soldiers was drawn up,—one's thoughts involuntarily went back to the tin soldiers of one's childhood,—and for the first time the Swedish National Anthem was heard on Siamese instruments, somewhat distorted and out of tune, it is true, but for all that a genuine mark of courtesy.

We were then conveyed to the palace in perfectly modern carriages harnessed *à la Daumont*.

This group of buildings, surrounded on all sides by a lofty crenellated wall, consists of about a hundred great and small edifices and temples, some very ancient, others modern. It contains the population of a little town—officials, court functionaries, servants, and, last but not least, some fifty of King Chulalongkorn's former superannuated wives. In his time, it will be remembered, polygamy flourished, but in our day this institution has declined considerably or fallen into desuetude. The present King is actually a bachelor.

We drove across a great courtyard between rows of artistically trimmed trees in terraces, with

thousands of small flags and paper lanterns hanging from them—all preparations for the coming Coronation. For the second time the National Anthem was given by the palace guard on the broad stone steps, and we passed between rows of small, bowing Siamese and through great halls, to find ourselves a moment later face to face with the autocrat of all the Siamese, the supreme head and most powerful defender of Buddhism, King Maha (the great) Vajiravudh.

From an almost circular, copper-coloured face, a pair of large, good-natured eyes positively gleamed with friendliness as they met mine; and that this friendliness was genuine, both in words and deeds, was amply proved during our stay in his country. The round head was supported by a thick-set, rather corpulent body, but his walk was as elastic as a youth's.

Born in 1881, the King was sent to Europe at the age of twelve to complete his education. After five years' preparatory studies, he entered the Royal Military College at Sandhurst in 1898, and the University of Oxford in 1900. After serving for two years in various British regiments and representing his country on different occasions, he returned to Siam in 1904. In 1895, on the death of an elder brother, he became heir to the throne, and succeeded his father on the latter's decease, October 23, 1910.

The conversation was carried on in fluent

English and, as was natural on an occasion such as this, was confined to everyday phrases and courtesies. But that the King could talk of other and far more interesting subjects, we very soon found out. Reserved and retiring by nature, he becomes frank and communicative as soon as he has overcome his first shyness and got to know one better.

The Queen Dowager, King Chulalongkorn's legitimate wife and chosen consort, was also present at the audience. She is the mother of the present King and bears the sonorous name of Sowapha Phongsi. She is a little lady of about fifty, with intelligent and sympathetic features; remarkably well-proportioned, and, like all Siamese women, with the neatest little feet and legs.

Now I can see the reader give a start and ask in surprise: What in the name of wonder had he got to do with her legs? But the fact is that in Siam everybody, man or woman, wears the national *panung*, consisting of a broad piece of stuff, which is wound round the body and the upper part of the legs, forming a kind of wide, baggy breeches, but leaving the lower part from the knee downward bare, or—as in this case—covered with an openwork black silk stocking in Western style. These *panungs* are to be had in great quantities and immense variety, and are often made of the most gorgeous silk fabrics. Every day of the week has its particular colour, and if

a lady wants to be really *chic*, she ought to wear a new *panung* on each of the 365 days of the year.

Unfortunately Her Majesty did not speak any language intelligible to Western ears, so that the conversation was carried on through an interpreter. During the long intervals occupied by the translation, I had an opportunity of examining the room more closely, but found to my disappointment that it offered nothing of the slightest interest, being furnished in the bad taste of the eighties. Everything was green—the carpets, the furniture, and the silk on the walls. Little electric fans stood on every table, making desperate attempts to cool the overheated atmosphere. One end of the room was occupied entirely by an oil painting representing in gorgeous colours the old King surrounded by a numerous and flourishing offspring.

When the audience was concluded, various military officers and court functionaries were presented, and among the latter was Madame Mahibal. She afterwards became our faithful friend and companion, and seldom or never have I met a more intelligent woman. But then two-thirds of the blood in her veins was Chinese, which explains a great deal.

From the royal residence we proceeded to the palace which, with true Oriental hospitality, had been placed at our disposal for the whole of our long stay in Siam. Saranrom (*i.e.* "Sans

Souci") Palace proved to be a large and roomy house, arranged with every Western comfort and modern invention. It is true that it had neither windows nor doors, these being replaced by a kind of screens resembling shutters. They were presumably high enough not to be overlooked by the short-statured natives, but to the taller Germanic race they offered a more imaginary protection, which, however, in no way detracted from the comfort of the airy palace. Long verandahs ran on each side of the house, and in the centre was a large open court with two refreshing fountains at each end. There was also a small park across the road, where one could enjoy the rich resources of the tropical flora undisturbed.

CHAPTER III

SIAM AND THE SIAMESE—BRIEF HISTORICAL FACTS

BEFORE I proceed to the description of the Coronation ceremonies, a few words about Siam and the Siamese themselves may not be out of place.

There is some divergence of view as to the origin of the Siamese, but the most probable hypothesis (Campbell's) is the following :—

About 600 B.C. Mongolian tribes from Central Asia and China (south of the Yangtze) descended upon the Malay Peninsula, driving the original inhabitants of the country to the southern point of the peninsula. Little is known of these negrito inhabitants, but it is assumed that a number of the half-savage tribes still to be found in the Malay Peninsula are descended from them.

About 400 years later another stream of Mons and Cambodians, this time from the table-lands of China, poured into the countries of Further India, and, thanks to their higher civilization, drove out their predecessors.

And finally, a little before the commencement of our era, came the last migration from Southern

China of the ancestors of the present nation—the Thai or Siamese. (Thai means “free,” and is used to this day by the Siamese themselves as the name of the whole nation.)

This race, which after a time became divided into two main groups, Shans and Laos, seems at first to have established itself in the upper valleys of the Menam and not to have moved south to the fertile plains of what is now Siam before the eleventh century. (The Laos, however, remained for the most part in the mountains.) The name of Siam is presumably a corruption of the old word Shan, and was probably brought to Europe by Portuguese navigators. It has also been asserted that the ancient Chinese Shang dynasty was identical with these Shans, but no authentic evidence of this has been found.

It was at about the same period that the great Cambodian kingdom began to arise, reaching an astonishing degree of culture and civilisation, a culture which has been best preserved to our day in the gigantic ruins of Angkor. These Cambodians were certainly intermixed with a large Indian element, and at first professed the Brahman religion, evident traces of which are still to be seen in the decorations of the ancient temples.

It was natural that these neighbours, who stood on a high intellectual level, should exercise a powerful influence on the Shan people as they advanced southward, and should to some extent

direct their future development. And it is from this quarter that a number of ancient customs and religious practices in Siam are derived. The alphabet bears a certain resemblance to the ancient Indian, and the language has also been influenced, as a number of variants of Pali words occur in it even at the present time. These circumstances, in conjunction with their Chinese origin, give the Siamese a better right to the name of Indo-Chinese than any other people.

At first the Shan people were probably under Cambodian sovereignty, and it is not until the year 1350, when the Siamese founded their first capital, Ayuthia, that their history as an independent nation begins.

Having freed his people from a foreign yoke, King Uthong built the city of Ayuthia on an island in the Menam, about forty-five miles from the place where Bangkok now stands. For rather more than four hundred years this city was the capital of the country, and under enlightened and far-seeing rulers the nation progressed rapidly in culture and power.

Many different dynasties afterwards ruled, were overthrown, and returned to power. The most remarkable of the kings of this period was Narai, who reigned from 1657 to 1683. It was during his reign that the country first formed connections with Europe, and that Western merchants were first permitted to establish themselves in Siam

and carry on trade. It was Narai also who invited Portuguese from the Malay Peninsula and even allowed the Jesuits to preach Christianity freely among his people—which was indeed a magnanimous trait in a semi-barbarian monarch, especially when we consider that just at that time Europe was being shaken by the fiercest and most sanguinary religious war that had occurred since the time of the Crusades.

The presence of the Jesuits resulted in friendly relations with the Pope and Louis xiv., which led to the dispatch of a magnificent embassy to France in 1685. (This remarkable event is recorded in a contemporary engraving.) The result of the mission was a number of advantages and concessions for French missionaries and merchants in Siam.

But it was not only religious and commercial objects that formed the basis of the growing friendship with France. For Narai had long watched with anxiety the growing influence of the Dutch in the Malay Peninsula, and the *rapprochement* with France was intended to form a much-needed counterpoise to the ambitions of the Netherlands. A French regiment was ordered to Ayuthia, but before it had been more than a few months in the country there was an outburst of general dissatisfaction with this courting of the West. The King and his European Prime Minister were murdered, and the French were peremptorily turned out of the country.

This Prime Minister, a Greek named Phaulkon, was an extraordinarily romantic personality. After having suffered shipwreck on the coast of India in company with certain Siamese officials, he accompanied the latter to Siam, where on account of his intelligence and statesmanlike qualities he soon became a trusted adviser of the King, and obtained the office of Prime Minister before the close of his career. Many were the reforms and improvements that were due to his initiative, and his name still lives in grateful remembrance among the Siamese population. It was he who built the stately palace at Lophburi and the first modern fortress on the Menam, about where Bangkok now stands, and to him also are attributed some of the great canals and irrigation works which are still in existence.

After Narai's death a new dynasty obtained the throne and ruled till 1767, when, together with the whole of the southern part of Siam, it fell under the dominion of the Burmese invaders. The capital, Ayuthia, was razed to the ground and has never risen again from its ruins.

The foreign dominion was, however, only of brief duration. A Chinese named Phya Tak, who had held a post of high responsibility in Northern Siam, succeeded in driving out the invaders, founded the new capital of Bangkok, and in the same year had himself proclaimed King, after which he victoriously repulsed all fresh

attacks on the part of the Burmese. His success, however, made him so overbearing that he lost his popularity and was deposed by his own Prime Minister in 1782.

This event brings us to the present dynasty, since the Minister in question, afterwards King Yaut Fáh, was great-great-great-grandfather to the present ruler of Siam.

The most remarkable monarchs of this dynasty were Mongkut (1851-1868) and Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), under whose wise and just rule the country progressed with rapid strides. And it is to be hoped that the new King will not be behind his father and grandfather in this respect.

Between 1851 and 1885 a somewhat peculiar state of things prevailed in the country, as in addition to the real King there was a King No. 2. The original idea was that when one King went to war or was otherwise prevented from exercising the sovereign power, the other should step into his place. This, however, has never occurred in actual practice, but King No. 2 by degrees became a shadow, whose chief occupation was intriguing and doing all he could to keep up his dwindling dignity. The natural result was that the relations between the two courts became intolerable, and now the institution has been entirely abolished and is not likely to be revived in the near future.

The country acquired its present boundaries in 1893. After disputes lasting for many years

between Siam and France, the latter country finally made a successful military *coup*, when two small gunboats ascended the river Menam unopposed, and with their guns trained on the palace at Bangkok dictated the terms of peace. These were, it is true, somewhat modified through the intervention of England, but even to-day every loyal Siamese heart burns with indignation at the outrage which robbed the Shan nation of large tracts of territory in Cambodia and to the east of the Mekong.

That is, as briefly as possible, the history of Siam and the Siamese. As will be seen, they have never played a part in the world's history, and have never cherished ambitious designs of becoming an East-Asiatic great Power. But their history is nevertheless of special interest, since it proves that even a small country with patriotism and goodwill may preserve its liberty for centuries. And this in spite of its confined position between two far more powerful neighbours—formerly Cambodia and Burma, now France and Great Britain.

What the future destiny of the country may be is difficult to say. But precisely on account of its confined position and its quality of buffer State between French and British interests in Further India, it is probable that the country will still have a long existence as a free and independent State. However, this depends to a great extent—to say no more than that—on the Siamese themselves.

CHAPTER IV

A FEW WORDS ON BUDDHISM

SIAM is the only independent country in which pure Buddhism still exists as the prevailing religion. As this doctrine appears to me sufficiently interesting and even humanly true, and as the legend of its founder is so poetic and attractive, I propose to dwell on it in a few words. But if you, dear reader, are not interested in foreign religious origins, then I advise you simply to skip this chapter, for it deals with nothing else.

Buddha was born about 500 B.C. in a little village not far from Benares. His father was Raja of the Sakyas, an Indian clan that never played any important part in history. The boy's family name was Gautama, but his adherents never use this, as they find it too commonplace; they apply to him instead such titles as "The Lion of the Sakya race," "The Conqueror," "The Fortunate One," "The King of Justice," etc. When the boy was seven days old, his mother died, and it was his sister who brought up the young Prince.

During his boyhood he exhibited a thoughtful



BUDDHIST PRIESTS.

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and retiring disposition, and took no part with others of his age in the warlike exercises and sports which at that time formed an important element of education. The legend relates that he nevertheless possessed unusual bodily strength. For when his father heard of the youth's effeminate tastes, he sent for him and made him submit to a number of tests in manly exercises. Without preparation of any kind the youth then seized the biggest bow in the kingdom, which was so stiff that it took a thousand men to bend it. With this weapon he shot some arrows as easily as if it had been a toy; and at every shot the twang of the bowstring was heard a thousand miles away. The father was so well satisfied with this that young Gautama was forthwith allowed to return to his meditations.

At the age of nineteen he married a girl of rare beauty and charm, and we know very little of his life for the next few years.

One day about ten years later—according to the story—he was out with his charioteer, and caught sight of an aged man, bent and broken by years and suffering. In reply to the Prince's questions the charioteer said that he too—Gautama—would one day look like that, for it was the lot of all mankind. Another day they met a sick cripple, and the charioteer again explained that suffering was inevitable in this world. And a few days later they saw a dead man. This was the first time

Gautama heard that every living thing must die ; for this fact had been carefully concealed from him as he grew up.

Meanwhile these three meetings were to have a decisive influence on his life. He began to meditate upon all the suffering there is in the world, and sought some means of preventing it. Then by degrees a resolution matured within him to withdraw from the world, and one moonlight night he left his home and his little newborn boy and wandered far away to a certain river, on the banks of which dwelt holy hermits.

On the way thither he was sorely tempted by the evil spirit Mara to return and receive the dominion of the world within seven days. But he resisted the temptation, and Mara vanished in wrath.

Gautama then remained with the hermits for a time, occupying himself with fasting and penance, in order by this means to find the way to true happiness. So far did he carry this mortification of the flesh that one day, he fell down as though dead. But when he came to life again he had found that this existence of suffering and renunciation did not bring him any nearer the goal. He began again to eat and to lead a more natural life, which so offended his teachers and friends that they hurriedly took to flight, seeing in him a heretic and a lost one.

Then Buddha began his wanderings in solitude,

and in the course of them he came to a village, where a young girl gave him a bowl of food. He sat down under a tree and began to meditate earnestly on the great problems of life. He was disappointed in himself and in the friends who had abandoned him. The true happiness he longed for seemed farther away than ever, and he sank into deep thought.

For forty-nine days he sat thus under the Bo-tree, alternately tempted by the evil Mara and inspired by the celestial powers. The latter finally conquered, and when he rose up again his spirit was liberated, the storm had blown over, and he had become the Buddha, *i.e.* "The Enlightened One." He knew now that it was his mission in life to go out among men and preach the way to eternal happiness and spiritual peace, to teach how evil may be avoided and how even death itself may be vanquished.

For forty-five years after this time Buddha worked as a reformer in the countries bordering on the Ganges, and at his death he was received directly into the state of bliss, Nirvana, of which he himself had preached, and which is still the highest goal of the unceasing effort of every orthodox Buddhist.

Of what then does this ancient doctrine consist?

In Buddha's "Eightfold Path" we find the following memorable words, which may be said

to form the whole basis and creed of his religion :

“Right faith, Right counsel,
Right words, Right deeds,
Right living, Right effort,
Right thoughts, and
Self-contemplation.”

As will be seen, it is a beautiful and ideal doctrine, but one difficult to follow, as it does not give a man any help from without, but refers him solely to his own efforts of strict self-renunciation.

Buddha never attempted to solve any of the great problems of the universe. He considered them of minor importance and exhorted his followers instead to endeavour to turn their minds to the attainment of Nirvana, a state of perfect spiritual calm, free from sin and free from desire, an eternal bliss in which all questions have ceased to exist. “Only when thy heart can wholly eschew the world and only burns for Buddha’s sanctity, when it has ceased to desire and thereby also ceased to suffer, only then canst thou enter Nirvana,” reads a passage of the ancient scriptures. Nirvana is thus the goal, but that it is not easy of attainment appears from the following sentence : “To master oneself is the hardest of victories ; yet, if thou wilt teach others, the first thing necessary is self-conquest.”

Since the transmigration of souls enters as an important factor into this aspiration to Nirvana, and since after death man may assume the form of any living thing, such as a dog, a horse, a serpent,

a fish, or an insect, this religion forbids the slaying of any being that has life; for otherwise the migration of a soul towards eternal bliss might be hindered. In this respect Buddhism is the most peaceable of all creeds. Indeed, it carries its forbearance so far that the priests keep among their few belongings a thin linen cloth, through which to filter their drinking water, in order to remove all animalcula and save them from a premature death in a thirsty throat.

Buddha further prescribed that every man during a certain period of his life should renounce the world and enter a monastery, in order to devote his retirement to self-contemplation and the study of the ancient holy books. This custom is still observed by every man in Siam, almost without exception, from the King down to the humblest servant; the usual age for entering the monastic life is from nineteen to twenty, but novices of from eight to ten may occasionally be received. The minimum period of retirement is two months, but every one is entitled to stay as long as he likes, and many are they who lead this strange existence to the day of their death. Chastity, poverty, and shaving of the hair are obligatory. The monks obtain their living by going round begging every morning with a bowl, in which—since it is regarded as a good deed—people are glad to put a pinch of rice or a little dried fish. That there is thus some variety both in the quantity and composition of

their meals, is obvious. Only one meal a day—in the morning—is permitted; the rest of their hunger has to be satisfied by smoking cigarettes and chewing betel. A belt, a food-bowl, a knife, a needle, and a linen cloth are the only objects a monk is allowed to possess, besides the obligatory orange-coloured robe, draped like a toga round the body, leaving the right arm and shoulder bare. A large fan also forms part of the equipment; this was originally intended partly as a protection from the rays of the sun, and partly to hide the face when walking outside the monastery, so as to exclude the sight of everything evil and sinful in the outer world. But the priests of the present day have found it a great deal more convenient to replace this fan by a big black umbrella, which certainly offers their shaven heads a better protection from the burning tropical sun.

Formerly the monasteries played a very important part, as they constituted the chief means of popular education. But now that regular schools have been established in many places throughout the country, the stay at the monastery has become more and more limited, and its educational importance has diminished. It is, however, an interesting relic of the past, and very characteristic of Siam in particular. The country has been called by many writers "the kingdom of the yellow mantle."

I will conclude this chapter by quoting a few

words from a funeral oration delivered by the old High Priest Vajirañana—an uncle of the present King—at the cremation of the late heir apparent. It is typical of the Buddhist outlook, and, as will be seen, it agrees remarkably with our own views.

“When we pass from one existence to another, the parents cannot protect their child, nor friends their friend; the sorrows of those left behind are no help to the dying. Death is a consequence of life, and our life is like that of the holy sacrifice that is slain on the altar of Brahma. When we know this, how should our sorrow be able to help the departed? The dead are not sustained by our lamentations. They are not affected by our conduct, but have already prepared their future existence by their own actions. Everything is subject to change, even that which seems to us immutable; such is the law of the Universe. . . .

“Having thus listened to the words of the Enlightened One, we know that the dead can no more return to life; therefore let us cease to lament, and think instead of the living, in order that the country may prosper; let us work for them. For this is the duty of the living, before death overtakes us. We are born and die—such is the way of the world; but our good deeds in this life shall bear fruit in the future, they endure everlastingly. . . .”

CHAPTER V

THE CORONATION CEREMONIES AT BANGKOK

IF the reader thinks it is an easy matter to crown a King in Siam, he is grievously mistaken. On the contrary, I should be inclined to call it a regular ordeal. For ten days at a stretch one was kept busy with various ceremonies, parades, lunches, and dinners, and as the Siamese love to turn night into day, it was often three or four in the morning before one could crawl into one's warm bed. For warm it was. One day the temperature went up to 106° in the shade, and even the most exacting of sun-worshippers could not complain of that. And in fact we found the climate rather oppressive at first, especially as the evenings—contrary to the rule—brought no refreshing coolness. But one gets used to anything, as the proverb says, and after a few days of fearful perspiration we were able to apply it to ourselves.

What seemed specially tempting at first were the numerous and long meals. In honour of the foreign guests French cooks had been engaged in all the fashionable houses, and every one did his best to surpass the others—perhaps more in



THE HIGH ALTAR OF A WAT.

[To face p. 46.]

TO THE
ATTORNEYS

quantity than in quality. The usual lunch consisted of *at least* ten dishes, and if one had the pleasure of sitting between two otherwise charming little Siamese ladies, neither of whom spoke or even understood any other than her mother-tongue, the time was apt to seem rather long. It happened at one of these lunches that only eight dishes appeared on the menu, and this fact prompted every European present to go up to the hostess at the end of the meal and press her hand warmly, thanking her for her more humane estimate of a Western stomach. The Siamese themselves eat nothing but rice in various forms, prepared with a great number of strong spices and curries. Curry is considered wholesome in that warm climate, and in my opinion Siamese cookery was by no means bad or monotonous.

It would take far too long to give an account of all these festivities, of the number of which one can form an idea from the fact that the Coronation programme filled a little book with no fewer than forty-two pages. I shall therefore confine myself to the more spectacular of them, or to those which appear to me most characteristic of the Siamese race.

On the afternoon of the day preceding the actual Coronation, the "consecration of the water" took place in the Wat Phra Sri Ratana Sasdaram, or the temple—situated within the walls of the palace—in which the so-called "Emerald Buddha" is preserved. This sanctuary, which is regarded

as one of the most holy in the country, was built by the founder of the present dynasty.

In the middle of the temple stands a great altar in the form of a flight of steps, covered with cloth of gold and reaching nearly to the lofty roof. On the different steps are placed bronze Buddhas, large and small, together with a variety of offerings, such as flowers, glass bowls, paraffin lamps, alarm clocks, peacocks' feathers, etc. And on the top of the pyramid the "Emerald Buddha" sits enthroned in solitary majesty, with the melancholy expression of the mouth and the slanting eyes gazing into eternity. The stone, however, of which the figure is carved is not emerald at all, but a large and unusually clear piece of jade. In front of the high altar are two standing figures of Buddha in gilt bronze, each with a parasol over its head, and there are three smaller altars, which were also smothered with artistically arranged flowers and offerings.

Along both sides of the temple run broad benches for the priests to sit on, and from floor to ceiling the walls are decorated with fresco paintings representing scenes from the Buddhist mythology. The lofty, narrow windows are as a rule covered with big shutters, so that the sanctuary is veiled in a mysterious semi-darkness. It may be mentioned as a curiosity that outside this temple, on each side of the broad steps, stand two life-size stone statues, one representing Venus and the other

St. Peter. Their history is unfortunately wrapped in complete obscurity.

When we entered the temple on that afternoon, all the eighty high priests of the kingdom were already assembled, sitting in long rows on the benches mentioned above, each with a tray of betel before him. At one end I descried the King's uncle, His Holiness Prince Vajirañāna, the "archbishop" of the country. At first I almost hesitated to call that dry, emaciated frame by the name of man, for anything more gaunt and miserable I have never beheld. My thoughts involuntarily flew to a skeleton which had chanced to preserve a little parchment-like skin on its projecting bones. But the oblique, deep-set eyes glowed with a genuinely religious fire. All the priests, as well as the objects on the different altars, were connected by a single long cotton cord—the symbol of eternity.

On a special table in the middle of the temple stood a long row of sealed glass carafes, containing water from different parts of the country, which was now to be consecrated for its object—the future King's morning bath before his Coronation.

After a while Vajiravudh entered. He first went up to a little praying-stool before the altar, said his prayers, and then lighted a great candle, symbolising the victory of enlightenment over the spiritual darkness of the world. Combustible threads led from this candle to all the other candles and lamps in the sanctuary, which then, one after

another, began to burn. The flames crept like glow-worms from step to step and soon reached the top of the high altar, where two bright torches began to blaze, one on each side of the "Emerald Buddha." At the same time a number of censers were also lighted, and soon the whole temple was wrapped in a thin veil of smoke, through which hundreds of candle-flames gleamed before the devout congregation.

A low murmur of prayers rose and fell from the eighty priests, sometimes scarcely audible, sometimes loud and swelling, but always in the same monotonous, sleepy, nasal tone. Now and then one of them would turn to spit out a quid of betel or to put in a fresh one. But otherwise they sat motionless with crossed legs, staring straight in front of them like waxworks, but invoking the celestial powers with evident devotion to grant a long and happy reign to the new King. The latter sat outwardly unmoved on his raised throne by one of the side walls, playing absently with his sword-knot.

After an hour and a half of unbroken praying the ceremony was over at last, and every one was glad to get out and fill his lungs with fresh air.

This Buddhist service, in spite of its quaintness, left a strong impression of genuine feeling and devotion, and was perhaps one of the most interesting and remarkable spectacles we witnessed in the Land of the White Elephant.

After careful preliminary studies of the relative position of the various stars, planets, suns, and moons, December 2 had been finally decided on for the day of the Coronation. For the Siamese are very superstitious in these matters, and never embark on any important undertaking without first consulting priests and soothsayers as to the most propitious time for doing so.

At an early hour it could already be seen that something out of the common was afoot. Everywhere groups of people in holiday clothes could be seen making for the palace, and one detachment of soldiers after another marched through the streets with flying colours and band playing—the latter with a noise that was far from agreeable to a Western ear. A stream of jingling rickshaws and hooting motor-cars wound its way in through the broad gates in the palace wall, and the guard presented arms with the regularity of a company of tin soldiers. Every one of noble birth in Siam must of course be present at the solemn moment, and load after load of gold-laced gentlemen and bejewelled ladies in *panungs* disappeared through the all-devouring gateway.

The red flag with its white elephant waved that day from every flagstaff in Bangkok, and wherever one turned one's eyes were showy decorations of artificial flowers and coloured paper lanterns, often framing good wishes for the new King in Siamese and English. For the Siamese love festive oc-

casions of this sort, which they enjoy like children ; and they would certainly have no objection to crowning their King half a dozen times a year, if it could be done.

We too arrayed ourselves in our best—and, unfortunately, warmest—wedding garments and betook ourselves to the palace in an excitement of anticipation.

With the other representatives of foreign countries we were first introduced into the great cruciform throne-room, Dusit Maha Prasad. Here was a blaze and sparkle of uniforms, swords, and jewels. Courtiers in gold-laced coats, generals in tunics plastered with orders, Princes and Excellencies in glistening *tem yot yai*—a sort of long open coat of thin, transparent stuff with gold and silver embroidery, which is worn outside the uniform ; a section of the King's life-guards in pale blue tunics, high pointed caps, and broad gold bandoliers, with curved swords at their sides ; a number of Princesses in bright *panungs*, short hair, low-necked bodices, and flashing jewels on their dark throats—in a word, all the beauty, wealth, and nobility that Siam could show was collected in this spot, in order by its presence to increase the brilliance of the Oriental spectacle that was soon to be enacted.

In the middle of the hall stood the historic throne of the ancient Thai nation : a large, square stone slab, supported by four sculptured marble feet, and covered with a huge, though somewhat moth-

eaten lion's skin, upon which again was placed a smaller gilt chair to sit upon. At the four corners of the throne stood lofty paraphernalia of antique workmanship, and at one side the immense, gleaming white state parasol. Both these last-named adjuncts are symbols of power and dignity, and play an important part in all processions and festivals. They also occur frequently in decorative patterns, and in this way correspond more or less to the "three crowns" of the Swedish arms. These paraphernalia are composed of from five to nine umbrella-like arrangements, spread out one above another and diminishing in size towards the top. The King alone is privileged to display nine of these tiers; Princes of the first rank have seven, and of the second only five.

While we sat idly waiting for a solid hour in the Dusit Maha Prasad, the monarch of the land, attended by Brahman priests, was pleased to take a refreshing morning bath in the water consecrated the day before. The bath appeared to be accompanied by very curious ceremonies, which unfortunately the profane eyes of Europeans were not permitted to see. I may mention here once for all that the Coronation itself is conducted exclusively according to Brahman and not Buddhist ritual—a custom derived from the Hindu and Cambodian influence of former days.

When at last the bath was over, the first act of the Coronation proper began.

In a small, enclosed court, one side of which was formed by the throne-room, the "octagonal throne" was raised. This, as its name implies, had eight sides, representing the cardinal and intercardinal points of the compass, but was otherwise of the simplest character.

Soon the procession arrived at a slow and solemn pace. At its head marched eight white-robed Brahman priests, with their hair arranged in immense well-oiled knots at the back of the head. Four of them blew white conches incessantly, which gave forth a monotonous sound, reminding one strongly of an ocarina. The other four were beating small drums, which were held so that the skins were vertical. At the top of the drum was a projection, to which was attached a cord with a wooden ball at the end of it. By twisting the instrument from side to side the ball was made to strike the two skins alternately, and each of them was tuned to a different note. The effect of this strange orchestra was distinctly more barbaric and original than pleasing.

After them came the King. He wore a white toga bordered with gold; his legs were bare and his feet thrust into sandals. His head was entirely uncovered, but behind one ear was a lotus-leaf, and behind the other a feather brush. His fine, light-brown skin contrasted well in the sunshine with his dazzling white dress; at that moment there was something of an ancient Roman emperor in his whole figure.



THE KING SHOWING HIMSELF TO THE PEOPLE AFTER HIS
CORONATION.

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NO VIND
SUSCEPTO

Finally came a long line of attendant chamberlains, officers, pages, and life-guards, each more brilliant and splendid than the other.

When the King had seated himself on the throne, and a large parasol had been placed behind him, the Governors of eight of the principal provinces crept forward one by one on hands and knees, each accompanied by a Brahman priest, to assure their liege lord of their fealty and of the unfailing devotion of the territory in their charge. Each Governor held in one hand a bowl of rice and in the other a cup of water; when the loyal address was concluded, the rice was strewed before the throne, while the King dipped his fingers in the water and sprinkled his head with it. This ceremony was performed eight times, each time towards a different point of the compass.

After this the procession moved off again, and another hour's waiting followed. Like all Orientals, the Siamese have no idea of time, and one has to be endowed with no small share of patience to be present at their festivals.

At last, however, the doors were thrown open, and the King advanced through the Dusit Maha Prasad, wearing a *panung* and a gold-embroidered tunic, over which was a gleaming *tem yot yai*, and climbed with some difficulty into his lofty throne.

In front of him went a dozen Brahman priests, tooting their conches and strewing barley on the floor. Behind him followed a long line of the

highest officials in the land, each bearing one of the numerous regalia of the kingdom. These, which are all symbols of the various powers of the reigning monarch, consist of :

“The Sword which is ever victorious” ;
“The White Parasol” ;
“The Crown of Victory” ;
“The Sceptre” ;
“The Red Slippers” ;
“The White Elephant’s Fly-Switch” ;
The Diamond Ring ;
The Fan ;
The Ewer ;
The Ampulla ;
The Golden Betel-Set ;
“The Golden Spittoon of the Lotus-Flower” ;
Rama’s Bow and Arrow ;
Two “Tridents” ;
The Royal Spear ;
An old musket ; and, finally,
Six swords with different names and of different appearance.

—as will be seen, a fairly well stocked arsenal of somewhat varied composition.

The music ceased. A short prayer was recited by the priests, in a half-chanting, half-mumbling tone. Now the great moment had arrived, and the hall was so silent that one could have heard a pin drop.

With a calm and dignified gesture the King raised the ancient, pointed crown, flashing with gems, from its cushion and placed it on his head, thus crowning himself by the grace of Buddha lord and autocrat of all the Siamese. Scarcely had he done this, when a loud cheer burst out from all

present ; drums and conches sounded louder than ever ; fifteen military bands in the courtyard outside played the Siamese National Anthem incessantly ; four separate batteries, drawn up in the neighbourhood, each fired a salute of 101 guns that nearly split the drums of our ears, and the bells of every temple in the country rang for an hour without ceasing. It was a deafening din, but worthy of a King of Siam.

While all this noise was going on, the various regalia had been placed upon the throne. The great diamond ring gleamed on the King's forefinger, and even the royal slippers were in their right place.

Then the eldest of the Princes advanced, and with clasped hands fell upon his knees before the throne. His example was followed by the other Princes, Princesses, and officials. On behalf of the others he took the oath of homage and loyalty in a brief address, whereupon they all smote the floor three times with their foreheads.

With this the actual Coronation was concluded, and the King went to a large open window, hung with heavy gold draperies, to receive the homage of the multitude assembled outside. The curtains were drawn aside for a moment, and at the sight of their monarch, resplendent in his royal robes, and at that instant strikingly resembling an incarnation of Buddha, the people fell to the ground as though thunder-struck amid cheers and invocations.

The Coronation proper being now over, the ceremonies were concluded with a short service in the Wat Phra Sri Ratana Sasdaram, with a similar ritual to that of the day before.

But what specially attracted attention, and perhaps offered the finest spectacle of the day, was the great procession from the throne-room to the temple in question. Under a glowing sun, which made the bright colours shine like fire, there was here disclosed to Western eyes a sight which more than anything else in the course of that day might be called genuinely Oriental, full of the pomp and splendour of the East.

The long procession was headed by a company of red-coated soldiers, belonging to the body-guard of King Chulalongkorn. After them came a detachment of lance-bearers in silver-embroidered tunics, preceding a hundred scarlet drummers, who performed in slow time on old war-drums of metal of the eighteenth century. Then followed a detachment of trumpeters, blowing long silver trumpets; the Brahman priests with their conches and drums; staff-bearers in the picturesque costumes of the old guard of nobles, many-coloured tunics with broad sword-belts; an endless crowd of court functionaries and pages, carrying the various regalia (if possible more numerous than before); officers with fluttering banners, and finally a whole forest of ornamental paraphernalia, in the middle of which the King was seen borne upon a gilt throne, entwined with flowers,

which had for a canopy a miniature pagoda spire, sparkling with jewels. The great state parasol was carried at his side. Then came more drummers, more priests, more chamberlains, and more soldiers, of which the last-named brought to an end a procession well over half a mile in length.

In all this overwhelming magnificence the chief interest nevertheless centred around the King's person. He sat there in his exalted seat, motionless as an idol, looking neither to the right nor to the left, and not taking the smallest notice of the deferential greetings of his kneeling people. He was full of the inborn majesty of the Eastern ruler, the sublime contempt for all who were beneath him in station. And it is certain that his subjects that day regarded him more as a god than as a human being. For my part, I have never seen a crowned head sustain his dignity better than did Maha Vajiravudh on December 2, 1911.

The day was concluded with a great banquet, at which the pages with phenomenal dexterity refreshed the guests by fanning them in the neck with big peacock-feather fans. The banquet was served in the Amarindra Hall, an apartment of immense proportions, decorated with interesting old frescoes of the legend of Brahma. This part of the palace is the oldest and dates from the foundation of Bangkok. It also contains a number of small rooms, in which the Kings have always resided hitherto. But I am not surprised that the

present sovereign prefers his newly built palace in the Dusit Park to these doubtless handsome and brilliantly decorated, but far from comfortable apartments. Following an old tradition, however, he spent a—presumably sleepless—night here before his Coronation.

On the following day the whole of the great procession passed through some of the richly decorated streets of the city. Every two-legged being in the place was naturally out of doors; but instead of saluting or bowing, the Siamese squat on their haunches, which is also their customary attitude when addressing an exalted person. The procession itself was like that of the Coronation day, only if possible longer and more magnificent. Here and there a halt was made, when the King was “landed” at a pavilion constructed for the purpose, from which he received the homage, addresses, and presents of various corporations.

On the afternoon of December 4 both banks of the Menam were lined with countless masses of people. On that day the King was to pass down the river in solemn procession to one of the more important temples, in order, according to ancient custom, to offer gifts of flowers, fruit, rice, and orange-coloured vestments. This procession was absolutely unique of its kind and peculiarly characteristic of Bangkok. Its origin is lost in antiquity, and it is related even of the first Thai King that “he caused boats to be built of brilliant

and terrible fashion, to patrol the rivers and by their mere appearance put to flight the enemies of the country." Thus intended originally for vessels of war, these boats—or copies of them—are now only used at the great annual festivals on the river.

We watched this interesting and picturesque naval review from a quay below the palace. All the craft were of the ancient Siamese model—long, narrow, shaped like a peas-cod, and with more or less lofty stems and sterns. They came floating downstream in pairs, and as they passed the King's seat on the quay, the oars were raised, the trumpets blared, the drums thundered, and all the rowers raised ringing cries of "Chau!"

The smallest and simplest boats led the way, and the crews of these wore ordinary sailors' dress. But as the armada advanced the vessels became bigger and finer, the rowers were clad in old-fashioned costumes, and under the baldachins amidships a motley crowd of white-robed Brahman priests and warriors in glittering dresses was stirring. The time for the rowers was given by two red figures fore and aft, who at regular intervals struck the end of a long pole, decorated with feathers, against the bottom of the boat.

In this way no fewer than forty of these "dragon ships" went by, each with its own historic name; such as, the *Tiger Boat*, the *Monkey Boat*, the *Garuda Boat*, etc. Finally

the largest and most magnificent of them all put in to the quay to take the King on board. Her stem was carved in the form of a grinning dragon's head, and her stern in that of a curling tail. The whole boat was painted in glaring colours or else gilt.

In the middle was a high and narrow throne, on which the King took his seat. A long-drawn cry was given by the commander, and the hundred short but broad paddles plunged simultaneously into the water, wielded by the same number of rowers in scarlet jackets, green scarves, and high, pointed caps bordered with gold. The warships saluted, and in a cloud of smoke the stately *Golden Hamsa* glided slowly down the river and out of sight. Immediately after came the no less stately *Prabhasara Jaya*, with the offerings on board, and finally some smaller boats with the gentlemen in attendance.

We stood on the bank for a long time, following the disappearing procession, of which we now and then had a glimpse through the white smoke of the guns. But, impressed as we were by the spirit of the scene, we Swedes could not help asking ourselves—is *this* the fleet (for there is really no other) which our gallant countryman, Captain S., has been sent for to reorganise? If so, we congratulate him!

Siam's present military organisation dates from 1902. Until that time military service had been



THE PROCESSION THROUGH THE TOWN.



THE "GOLDEN HAMSA."

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performed by a special class of the people, a kind of slaves of the State, who on reaching a certain age were compelled to put on the King's uniform, and who served with the colours until they became decrepit with age and unfit for further work. But this antiquated institution by no means satisfied the most modest demands for an army at all fit to take the field, and after a number of the Princes and a whole staff of generals had studied the various military organisations of Europe for a couple of years, the present régime was introduced, which is founded on the militia system with a dash of universal service.

Every citizen is liable to serve for two years in the line, and then for five years in the first and ten years in the second reserve ; but only so many are called up as are required to keep up a strength of about thirty thousand men on a peace footing. Those who are thus called up receive as compensation certain abatements of taxes. The rest of those liable to serve pass straight into the reserve, which is called out at certain intervals for from fifteen to sixty days' training. Besides his arms and his clothes the Siamese soldier receives 4 ticals (1 tical = about 1s. 6d.) a month, besides 25 satungs (about 4d.) a day, half of which latter sum, however, is stopped to pay for the single meal of rice that the State " provides." The soldier has to buy his own foot-gear and the rest of his food. No wonder the majority of the army goes barefooted !

No fewer than twenty-five thousand eight hundred men of this force were paraded one day on the great drill-ground just outside the palace walls. The King was to hold a review of his army, and from all parts of the country troops had been pouring into the capital, the barracks of which could not contain a tenth part of these invaders. Most of them had therefore pitched their tents in the great temple courts, which at the time of the Coronation had all the appearance of a camp.

There was an exemplary smartness about the troops, and their march past before their supreme war lord went with such dash and precision that even a German military eye was opened wide in surprise and approbation. The cavalry on their native ponies were perhaps rather suggestive of toys to a Western, though the active and extremely wiry little horses were as fresh as the most fiery Arab. And that they were not easy to ride was shown by a little dun-coloured stallion, who in spite of whip and spur obstinately persisted in going his own way right up to the King's horse, and gave the latter a push which nearly sent him over. The artillery consisted principally of mountain-guns, carried on the backs of elephants or mules.

As I have said, the whole parade gave evidence of extreme proficiency in drill. It remains to be seen what this army can do when it comes to real war.

In connection with the great military spectacle of the armed forces, a review was also arranged of Boy Scouts from different parts of the country—a movement which has spread of late years with incredible rapidity even in Siam—and an inspection of the whole of the newly formed “Wild Tiger” Corps.

This curious institution, which only dates from May 6, 1911, has nevertheless spread like wild-fire throughout the country, owing to the personal intervention and initiative of the King.

The “Wild Tigers” Club was started under the impression of a not very satisfactory want of co-operation among the official class in particular, the members of which worked each for his own benefit and not for the good of the country. The institution is not intended to be military, but its object is to bring the civil elements into closer mutual relationship and to inspire them with a feeling of national solidarity. In reality a development of the Scout idea, though adapted to grown-up men, it nevertheless possesses a regular, though masked, military organisation. The headquarters are at Bangkok, where the Corps owns a large clubhouse and “playgrounds,” and where the “General Staff” with the King as Chief Scout reside. Detachments are also to be found in every town or province of the whole country, which are directly under the orders of the headquarters at Bangkok. Any one over the age of eighteen has the right

to join the "Tigers," and enlistment is entirely voluntary.

No regard is paid to age, so that at their drills—which usually take place early in the morning or at sunset—one may see striplings of twenty, who have reached higher rank through rapid promotion, commanding grey-haired men of fifty, whose faces betray anything but satisfaction. The training consists of gymnastics, riding, drill, camping and bridging, etc.; longer excursions in field and forest with their accompanying camp life also form part of the programme.

The regulation uniform is a black shirt, black knee-breeches, bare knees and brown stockings. On the head a big scout hat with a yellow brim and a white cock's feather. Also an incalculable number of ribbons, stars, badges of rank, and other gewgaws, with which the Siamese love to adorn themselves. By the side a big knife or axe. The Club's proud motto is, "Rather lose life than honour."

With a fine and patriotic object in view, this movement was at its inception undoubtedly a step in the right direction. But, as so often happens in such cases, it was soon carried to excess, and even came near to causing the deposition of its own originator. For in February 1912—only a month after our departure from Siam—a widespread conspiracy was accidentally discovered among the army, which, owing to the

King's exaggerated interest in his "Wild Tigers," felt itself slighted and desired a real soldier at its head. The "Tigers," in fact, claimed by degrees not only his time and energy, but his money. The uniforms became dearer and smarter every day; the drills and "games" more and more childish and theatrical. And, finally, the "voluntary" entry into the Corps became so far obligatory for all, that a man whose name was not enrolled was regarded as a suspicious and untrustworthy person. All this, together with a number of other irregularities, resulted, as I have said, in a serious conspiracy, which, if it had not been betrayed at the last moment by one of its participants, might have had the gravest results for the new monarch. The revolution, however, was nipped in the bud, and the delinquents had to pay dearly for their disloyal attempt.

After that the "Wild Tiger" craze seems to have died down somewhat in the capital, but continues to flourish in the country round, to which the King has now transferred his activity as Chief Scout, and where he often personally conducts the exercises of his faithful adherents.

The inspection we witnessed resembled in every respect a rally of Boy Scouts, and concluded with a general "rush up" in English style *à la* Baden-Powell. That this moment in particular was rich in comic interludes was not to be wondered at. For to see fat old men,

dressed like boys and with the sweat spurting from their shining faces, run as if their lives depended on it, now throwing their hats into the air and now stumbling over a stone or a bank and sprawling on the ground, sending medals, ribbons, knives, and other belongings in all directions, could not fail to provoke a hearty fit of laughter.

One of the evenings during the Coronation week was set apart for a great illumination of the town and river with accompanying fireworks. Entertainments of this kind are of frequent occurrence in Bangkok and are extremely popular with the masses. There was not a house or a building that in some way or other had not put on a fiery dress, and in every courtyard and square there was a crackling and hissing of squibs and wheels and candles and every kind of device. "Every man his own pyrotechnist" is the rule in Siam, for both great and small of all ages are quite at home in the manufacture of these explosives, which are fitted somehow into pieces of bamboo of all lengths and sizes.

But most suitable of all for these festivals of fire is the bright surface of the river, and there it was that the chief decorations were displayed that evening.

Along the banks glittered long rows of coloured paper lanterns, broken here and there by more prosaic electric arc-lamps, whose dazzling rays

were reflected a thousandfold in the pitch-black water. Behind them, against the velvety tropical sky, rose the black masses of the pagodas, some of them outlined with flickering temple-lamps, which made them look like gigantic isosceles triangles. The river swarmed with illuminated boats, from which one cracker after another was thrown into the water, sputtered, shone, and disappeared. But the finest sight of all was a winding procession of all the old historic boats gliding down the stream. Their slender forms were outlined with lights, and on the larger ones seven gleaming paraphernalia were erected in a long row, reflecting their umbrella-like outlines in the glittering waters of the Menam. As these dream-like craft came nearer, their scarlet-clad rowers sang one old war-song after another, which rang out clear and brisk, though sometimes with an undertone of melancholy, in the listening night.

A sort of fairy-like glamour lay over this scene. If one had not heard now and then the whizz of the rockets or noticed a faint smell of acetylene from the boats—for their paraphernalia were illuminated by this means—it would have been easy to imagine oneself transported to the wonderland of the *Arabian Nights*.

As a conclusion to all these brilliant festivities of the Coronation week, I will here say a few words about the gala performance which took place

one evening in the Dusit Park theatre. As every one knows, it is impossible for a monarch to be crowned or to meet the chief of another State without some more or less entertaining function of this sort being got ready. And of course the Siamese did not wish to be behind their European models in this respect, any more than in any other. Thus it was that "Gala Performance" appeared on the programme—make your arrangements accordingly! And a performance it was, which in duration easily beat all precedents among us Occidentals. For it began at 9 p.m. and was not over before half-past two in the morning.

Now, good reader, you must not suppose that this was an absolutely unmixed delight, however much you might perhaps have enjoyed the splendid costumes or the brilliant house. For to sit five hours on end—with only *one* short *entr'acte*—when the thermometer is at about 105° and the mosquitoes are unmercifully supping on your ankles, certainly has its drawbacks. But in spite of this, the evening—though somewhat long—was nevertheless extraordinarily interesting. For one does not often have the chance of seeing a Siamese theatre.

Of the house itself there is not much to be said; on the whole it resembled any other theatre on a similar occasion, except that the seats were occupied by brown instead of white spectators.

But all the more interesting was the stage and what took place upon it.

There was no curtain and no scenery, if we except a sort of grotto arrangement at the back with a little temple on the top. The stage was covered with a thick green carpet and extended into the auditorium in the form of a T. The wings nearest the back were hung with heavy gold draperies, behind which an invisible chorus chanted its characteristic songs from time to time, alternating with the performances of a large orchestra composed exclusively of Siamese instruments, in which drums, bits of wood, and gongs played the principal parts. In one corner the conductor and stage manager—an old Siamese—lay on his stomach and beat time by striking two small brass bells together; and now and then he yelled something to the performers if everything was not going as it should.

The performance itself might be called a pantomime ballet, although this ballet was on very different lines from ours. The more a performer can bend his arms and legs into the most extraordinary attitudes, the better. Their joints are made supple from childhood, and finally become as elastic as indiarubber. The hands and fingers also play an important part, and only when the tips of the fingers can be bent back so as almost to touch the forearm, is the height of proficiency considered to have been attained. The move-

ments of the dance endeavour as far as possible to imitate the attitudes in which the figures of the ancient Indian gods are represented. The costumes and masks are also originally derived from India, though in recent times they have been somewhat adapted. Every time an actor enters, he begins by kneeling to the King and showing his deference by striking his forehead three times against the stage. Then only does he take up his part.

The first part of the performance was entitled *Parásu Ráma and Mékhalá*. Fortunately a synopsis of it was given in the programme, otherwise it would have been quite impossible to understand even approximately what all these acrobatic capers meant.

The argument is here given in all its simplicity :

“It is springtime, and gods and goddesses have assembled to celebrate this joyful event. Their leaders are Arajun, the god of war, and Mékhalá, the goddess of the sea. She possesses a wonderful pearl, with which she can produce lightnings.

“Suddenly Parásu Ráma (Ráma with the axe) appears, a Brahman of the Bhrigu race, the grandson of Brahma and the favourite of Siva. On catching sight of the pearl in Mékhalá's hand, he determines to wrest it from her. He appears suddenly from a cloud and runs in among the dancers. Since Ráma is known to be the sworn enemy of all warriors, and since, owing to his



THE PANTOMIME BALLET.

(To face p. 72)

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friendship with Brahma, he defies the other gods, they all fly on the approach of the terrible Brahman. Even the war-god Arajun finds it more prudent to retire, as he does not wish to quarrel with his father's favourite.

"The only one who remains is the goddess of the sea, who has hidden behind a black cloud. However, the terrible Ráma discovers her hiding-place and exhorts her to give up the pearl. But she mocks her enemy. She allows him to come quite close to her, and then slips away laughing. Thus the chase proceeds all round the universe. The Brahman, finding at last that he can never catch her, becomes furiously angry and throws his axe at the goddess, producing a fearful peal of thunder. Mékhalá avoids the missile and hurries back to her kingdom at the bottom of the sea."

This simple little plot—simple, that is, except for the pursuit round the universe—took fully two hours and a half to perform, and no one will be surprised to hear that there were many dull moments and that a number of "cuts" would have been beneficial.

The second half of the evening was taken up by *A Scene from the Ramayana*, which was also tolerably uneventful. The action centred about a combat between demons and apes, in which the latter especially were played in a very faithful and realistic fashion. But then, of course,

the fauna of the country offers ample opportunity for the study of this man-like species.

And with this I bring my chapter on the Coronation to a close. In summing up it may be said without exaggeration that the originality of the whole celebration was genuine and unsurpassed, its pomp worthy of a King with six and a half million subjects, and its intense heat calculated to arouse warm feelings for the country and its people. In conclusion, I cannot omit to give sincere praise to those concerned for the excellent way in which all the complicated arrangements worked, and for the really exemplary order which prevailed from first to last.

CHAPTER VI

RAMBLES IN BANGKOK—MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

IT was a genuine relief after a solid week of nothing but festivities to become oneself again and to have an opportunity of studying one's surroundings a little more closely. For of course this had been impossible during the Coronation.

Bangkok has often been called "the Venice of the East," and in so far as a remarkably widespread network of canals intersects the town in all directions, it deserves the name. But that is the only resemblance I have been able to find with *Venezia la bella*. Perhaps the comparison was more justified some twenty years ago, when there were no roads and all communication was really carried on by boat or canoe. Now broad streets and boulevards run through the whole city, and the canals are crossed by stone bridges in Western fashion. It is only in the old parts of the town and in the Chinese quarter that these waterways have preserved their original character; here one may still find a bit of Venice, though in a very degenerate guise.

Unlike other large cities of the East, Bangkok

has no distinct foreign quarter. But then of course the number of whites is insignificant in comparison with the rest of the population, and smaller in proportion than in any other place in this part of the world (China excepted). It is a rare thing to meet Europeans in the street.

The population varies between 500,000 and 600,000, of whom about 120,000 are Chinese and only 800 to 1000 whites.

The sons of the Celestial Empire play a very important part in Siam. The fact is that the real inhabitants of the country are so lazy and unenterprising by nature, that as a rule they will do no work, preferring to sit idly chewing betel or holding a cigarette between their betel-blackened teeth. All trade and industry is therefore in the hands of the persevering Chinese, who do not despise even the hardest work. They have made their way everywhere as merchants, business men, clerks, retailers, and servants, while the Siamese in their indolence sit and watch the foreign invaders snapping up all the profits under their noses. As the two races often intermarry, an interesting question has lately come to the front and is actively discussed: Will the Siamese be able to resist this strong admixture of a foreign element, or is the whole race doomed to be gradually modified and to lose all its old individuality? Of course they themselves declare that there is no danger of this happening, since they regard the

old Thai blood as stronger than that of the intruders. There is nevertheless considerable difference of opinion on this point, and for myself I rather incline to the contrary view.

Any one taking a walk at sunset through one of the great arteries of the city will see a very complete set of samples of the inhabitants of Bangkok, and at the same time a picture of street life which far surpasses that of many of the great cities of Europe in vivacity and originality. For this is just the hour when the shops are shut and when all are hurrying, after the heat and labour of the day, to enjoy a short promenade in the—sometimes quite imaginary—cool of the evening. Various races here rub shoulders with one another in a motley confusion—thoughtful Siamese in wide *panungs* and dirty white linen jackets; oblique-eyed Chinese in high straw hats, with their well-oiled pigtails hanging down their backs; lively, gesticulating Japanese and tall, turbaned Hindus; Laos-warriors from the interior of the country, with broad swords thrust into their belts; and women swathed in many-coloured *sarongs*. Burmese, Javanese, Cambodians, Annamese, Pathans, and all the rest of the different races wander up and down the narrow pavements in fraternal harmony. Here and there one catches sight of the orange-coloured toga of a monk, with his shaven head and the inevitable black parasol under his arm. And along the street flows an

endless stream of hooting motor-cars, rattling ox-waggons, and jingling rickshaws, in the shafts of which the coolies' sweaty bodies shine like polished copper saucepans in the uncertain light.

The electric tram-cars also do their share in adding to the lively traffic. A few years ago only horse-trams were to be found, and it is related that when electricity first took its place among the means of transport of modern Bangkok, the natives fell on their knees and worshipped the wheels of the cars, convinced that they must be the abode of good spirits. Nor did any one venture to take a ride in them, and it was only when the old King had shown his subjects a good example that the traffic was resumed. Now one sees the bright cars packed with contented faces, the owners of which are probably wondering how they could manage to exist without this convenient means of communication.

The tram-cars offer certain advantages to strangers, since at any rate they are compelled to follow the lines laid down for them, and cannot, like the rickshaws, turn and twist with him through the most impossible streets, from the maze of which it may be difficult to find a way out. For as a rule a coolie speaks no other language than his own, and if you give him an address and ask if he understands English, he unfailingly answers with a broad grin, "Oh yes,



A SIAMESE BEAUTY.

[To face p. 78.]

TO THE
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master," and then starts off to the opposite end of the town. They all know as much English as *that*. But to get them afterwards to alter the course they have once taken is almost impossible, as all one's efforts are only met by an "Oh yes, master," while they go hurrying on like restive horses. For all that, a rickshaw ride is a sensation that should by no means be missed, and there is a peculiar charm in being thus borne along on a fine evening through the dusky streets towards an unknown destination.

But in order to see the street life of Bangkok properly, one ought to spend a few hours in the Chinese quarter, Sampeng, and make a hurried round of some of the numerous pawnshops to be found there. These pawnshops, which are kept exclusively by Chinese, are certainly under police supervision, but for all that they offer a good market for all kinds of stolen goods. The small shops are open to the street and contain the most varied assortment of articles that can be imagined. From the roof hang rows of old cast-off clothes and shirts. The walls are usually bright with gaudy German colour-prints of King Chulalongkorn in the bosom of his family. The floor is strewn with worn-out shoes, bits of carpet, old iron, and various household articles, among which I more than once saw the rusty skeleton of an old Swedish "Primus" stove. But in the middle of the room stands a rickety glass

case, in which all valuables are kept. Here, with luck, one may sometimes happen upon really beautiful old silver work, enamelled boxes, Chinese and Siamese porcelain, arms, etc., all of course at fantastic prices, which after persistent bargaining are usually reduced to a third of what was originally demanded. But, besides being crammed with things, these hovels serve as the dwelling of their respective proprietors, and are at the same time bedroom, dining-room, and parlour. The floor is crawling with dirty-nosed youngsters, and the youngest of the family lies shrieking in a corner among a heap of other rubbish, while the mother sits calmly chewing betel at the entrance and smiles a jet-black smile upon the passers-by. But the husband looks after the business and blinks his oblique and cunning eyes at the visitor from behind a pair of colossal horn spectacles.

Another interesting place for students of popular life is the floating market that is held on the river on certain days of the week between midnight and sunrise.

As already mentioned, a large part of the population lives in floating houses or boats. In this they possess a considerable advantage over other townspeople, since, when they want to move, they have only to cast off their moorings and let the whole habitation drift with the stream until they find a convenient place in

which to take up their abode, when they drive their long bamboo poles down into the mud to serve as anchors.

It is these floating quarters of the city that hold a market in the middle of the night. Boats assemble from every direction, laden to the water's edge with fruit, vegetables, rice, and poultry. Here it is the women who do the business, and by the light of a little lamp, made entirely of coco-nut and burning its oil, the bargaining goes as briskly as on any market-day at home. The whole river is covered with these little flickering flames; they gleam everywhere like glow-worms, and the boats lie so closely that it would be useless to try to make one's way in a steam-launch among them. But with the first rays of the sun all these specks of light are extinguished, and where but lately a confusion of cranky craft and yelling humanity might be seen, the broad river lies empty and silent in its quiet everyday mood.

To the professional tourist and globe-trotter, who goes about with a well-worn Baedeker in his hand and visits all the places marked with a star, Bangkok offers little of interest, for it has no ancient and world-renowned monuments, nor has Baedeker yet reached this remote corner of the earth. And if he had, the stars would certainly be both few and small. For, as we have seen, the capital was founded as lately as

the close of the eighteenth century, and thus the sights cannot be older than 130 years at the most. The only buildings of interest in this respect—besides the palace—are a number of temples, and it is to these that the few tourists who find their way to “the Venice of the East” first turn their steps.

One of these temples or *wats* really consists of a collection of buildings, often surrounded by a lofty wall. Here are to be found the priests' houses, convent schools, libraries, and so on, and finally the holy of holies, called the *bawt*. This is usually a lofty rectangular building with a narrow roof-ridge and curved gables, which are symbolic of the form of the Nāga (a great serpent which screened with its head the meditating Gautama from the sun before he became Buddha). Alongside the *bawt* stand pagodas great and small, in the shape of sugar-loaves, erected in memory of the dead and sometimes supposed to contain miraculous relics.

Now it should be explained that according to Buddhist ideas a man can do no better deed on earth than building a *wat*; this is considered to reduce the period of transmigration to a remarkable extent, and to increase the prospect of a speedy attainment of Nirvana. But when the temple is once built, it may be left uncared for and fall into ruin; since its upkeep by no means contributes to swell the total of good deeds. For this reason the

whole country is full of temples, large and small, handsome and ugly, but all in the most lamentable state of neglect and bad repair.

Without doubt the most interesting temple in Bangkok is the Wat Poh. Through a winding labyrinth of courts, in which ghastly idols and animal figures grin at one everywhere, the visitor arrives at last at a great *bawt*, in which the Sleeping or Reclining Buddha is preserved. This is an enormous statue of 175 feet in length, built of brick and covered with an even coat of gilt cement. The feet alone measure $4\frac{1}{2}$ yards, with toes a yard long. The whole Buddhist legend is illustrated on the soles with inlaid mother-of-pearl. In the prevailing half-light the colossus appeared even more gigantic and grotesque, and a man by its side sank into the most insignificant pygmy. But here, as everywhere in these sanctuaries, time had laid its inexorable hand upon the once magnificent statue, and the gilt plastering was coming off in big pieces, some of which had been ground to dust by the boots of visitors.

The next temple worth visiting is the great Wat Cheng (*cheng*=elephant), lying on the very bank of the river opposite the old palace. It contains nothing remarkable within its walls, but is interesting to study from an architectural point of view. Its mighty mass rises in elegant lines towards the sky, and at a far distance the lofty pagoda appears to be richly decorated with

sculptures and mosaics. But on coming nearer it is found that all this magnificence is only an illusion, produced by bits of glass and porcelain of different colours, which have simply been stuck with a little mortar in patterns on the otherwise white plaster. In the intervals are small, brightly painted statues of stucco, naïve and touching in their childishness. But, as I say, at a distance the whole makes a very good impression, and this ornamental pagoda forms an important part of the city's outline, without which Bangkok would no longer be Bangkok. Dominating the whole landscape as it does, this edifice is the one most frequently seen represented in pictures and photographs of Siam.

If one takes the trouble to climb the steep stairs, an extensive view is to be seen from the top. The capital lies as flat as a pancake with its network of canals, and only one green hillock forms an agreeable relief. On its summit gleams a white pagoda ; this is the Wat Sakase.

The whole of this hill is the work of men's hands, and in its construction a huge mound of stones and bricks was first piled up, on which some tens of thousands of loads of earth were afterwards dumped. Now one would never guess its origin, overgrown as it is with great trees and a luxuriant tropical flora.

I went there one morning and called on the reverend chief priest of the temple, Phra Dama-



A PAWN SHOP IN BANGKOK.



THE ENTRANCE TO WAT POH.

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dhada Chariya. On a terrace at the top of the hill and at the foot of the white pagoda—which is said to contain some of Buddha's bones—we sat over a cup of tea and chatted of everything between heaven and earth (through an interpreter, of course). The lean little man discussed politics and other worldly matters with great animation, but he was not really in his element until the conversation turned upon different religions. He was well up in Christianity, and drew a remarkably interesting parallel between it and Buddhism, which would be too long to repeat here. The conclusion was, however, that he thought the two religions were about equally good. That is, of course, his own affair, but I am bound to say I had scarcely expected such an utterance from one of the leading ecclesiastical authorities of the country.

On the way down I looked into his little house. The rooms bore a certain resemblance to dusty storerooms, and on shelves and presses stood long rows of Buddhas, porcelain bowls, lamps, tea-pots, etc., of which articles he loaded me at parting with as many as I could carry. He was an interesting and genial old man, and after exchanging photographs we parted the best friends in the world. For friendliness is a distinguishing trait of the Siamese character.

Another of the sights of the city is the royal stables with the white elephants. These animals

formerly played a very important part in the country, but their prestige is dwindling with every year, and now one may almost say that they only exist as a curiosity and an ornament.

As everybody probably knows, these "white" elephants are far from being white, but are reddish brown with paler patches here and there. In this respect they differ but very slightly from other individuals of their race. Their chief distinguishing mark is the red eyes—in other words, they are simply albinos.

In old days the animals were regarded as sacred and were worshipped just like other idols. When a white elephant was captured, the whole country was thrown into transports of religious feeling. Great festivals were set on foot, prayers were offered, and all the temple bells rang, proclaiming the joyful event. The captured monarch of the forest was then transported to Bangkok with great marks of honour, and there received by the King at the head of all the priests, officials, military officers, and other classes of the population. Indeed, a company of soldiers was even told off to act as a guard of honour before the decorated stables. One ceremony after another was gone through, ending in the elephant's new names, titles, and dignities being inscribed on a big piece of sugar-cane, which he was then given to eat—presumably the only part of the festivities from which he himself derived any pleasure.

The cause of the white elephants being held in such honour is twofold. On the other hand, Gautama in one of his earlier incarnations is thought to have been one of these animals; this accounts for their sacredness. On the other, an old tradition predicts that the world will one day be conquered by a king who has in his possession the "perfectly white elephant" which brings victory to its rider; this accounts for all the marks of honour. And as the Siamese still think that they and no one else are to be masters of the world, it is evident that white elephants must not be lacking among their Kings' possessions.

At present, however, there are only three: two big, handsome old he-elephants with splendid tusks, and a smaller she-elephant. The former are ill-tempered old rogues, and it is as well to keep out of their way for fear of being trampled. The latter, captured quite recently, is quieter, and even allows herself to be fed by visitors. Her first appearance in Bangkok, however, was rather a boisterous one. Being scared by something or other, she bolted and upset a tram-car, an automobile, several ox-carts, and a few banana-stalls, before she could be persuaded to check her destructive promenade.

It is a real pity that elephants have fallen into disuse in the civilised parts of Siam. They are never seen now in the streets of Bangkok, and they took no part whatever in the long series

of Coronation festivities, which twenty years ago would certainly have included a great elephant parade of some kind.

Only in the interior of the country are the animals still used on any large scale as draught, riding, or pack-animals, and for transporting the huge trunks of teak from the forests down to the rivers. There they are still indispensable to man and form his best auxiliary in the struggle between cultivation and the jungle.

The only time I saw elephants in Bangkok was at the Queen Dowager's country place, Phya Thai, just outside the town. She has established there a sort of model farm, in the work of which the colossal beasts are still employed.

This little country house, with its buildings in the Siamese style, its beautiful parks and gardens where the flowers rival each other in gorgeousness, its clear ponds where all kinds of wading birds lead their untroubled existence, made an extraordinarily pleasing and attractive impression.

I shall never forget one of my last visits to the amiable old lady at her dower-house, where she spends the greater part of her time in the company of her favourite child, Princess Valay. Both ladies were dressed entirely *à la siamoise*—that is, with bare feet and legs, *pannung*, and loose-fitting peignoir. In company with the King, who often goes there to visit his mother, we walked at sunset up and down the well-raked paths, dis-

cussing the future prospects of the country, while the birds sang their trilling vespers above our heads.

The Queen Dowager had taken an extraordinary liking to my wife, and this for a rather curious reason. Some years ago one of her little girls died very suddenly, and her sorrow was all the greater as the little one had been the favourite child. But now she had conceived the idea that the girl's soul in the course of its wanderings had come to rest with Marie, whom she therefore surrounded with attentions in a most touching and kindly way.

The old lady was altogether a very sympathetic and amiable woman. With her clear head and good sense it would not surprise me if at some future time she came to play a similar rôle in Siam to that of the old Dowager Empress in the Celestial Empire—of course *en miniature*.

Since betel-chewing went out of fashion some time ago among the upper classes, the Queen Dowager has taken snuff as a substitute, and snuffs it up with great dexterity and the help of a U-shaped silver tube. But apart from this she is very civilised and thoroughly European in her ideas of things.

This is true also of the King, and in an even higher degree. During my long stay in Siam I learned to know him as a man of progressive ideas, whose first thought is his country's welfare

and prestige. It is true that he had been bitten by the unfortunate "Wild Tiger" movement, and in that connection had gone further than prudence and policy dictated, but the patriotic character of the original idea nevertheless remains as an unequivocal proof of his solicitude for his people's welfare. He has the history of his country at his fingers' ends, and is at the same time a warm patron of art.

One of his greatest hobbies is collecting old Siamese porcelain, of which there is a whole museum in his favourite residence, the Dusit Palace. Himself an expert, he is glad to show the handsome old pieces to his guests, giving at the same time a lecture on the history of Siam.

One day, after an exhibition of this sort, we went over the modern palace and were shown its various rooms. The King then took us into a small apartment, in the middle of which stood a miniature altar with a number of small images of Buddha and a profusion of flowers. A series of screens and heavy draperies cut off this sanctuary from the outer world.

"Would you like to see a bit of my father?" the King asked with an engaging smile, as he raised a small golden urn, richly studded with flashing gems, from the altar.

"Take hold, it won't hurt you,"—and I found myself with a part of the mortal remains of the late King Chulalongkorn in my hand. Every

Siamese is cremated and the ashes are collected and preserved in urns made for the purpose, which are decorated more or less artistically according to the social position of the deceased. This one was a real masterpiece of goldsmith's work, which of course corresponded to the exalted nature of its contents.

A king, however, is a sufficiently important person for his ashes to be divided among several different urns. The chief part is deposited in a specially prepared space under the roof of the palace, but in addition each of the sons receives a small portion, which he faithfully carries with him wherever he goes. It was this small portion that was preserved in the glittering casket, but my modesty did not permit me to raise the lid.

These cremations are accompanied by solemn ceremonies and great pomp. It is said that it took nearly a year to prepare everything for the late King's funeral pile, during which period he had to lie waiting—a not very attractive custom.

Another ceremony which is attended by a particularly elaborate ritual is the "cutting of the top-knot."

It must be explained that every child in Siam has its head shaved, with the exception of one small patch, where the hair is allowed to grow freely. As the child grows up this tuft is dressed and tended with the utmost care; fragrant oils are rubbed into it, and the incipient pigtail is

always decorated with fresh flowers and rolled up with the help of a big gold pin into a neat round ball on the top of the head.

When the child is 11, 13, or 15 years old, he has reached the age at which a new life is to begin and all childish things are to be put away. This is what is symbolised by the cutting of the top-knot.

When the day has been fixed by soothsayers and astrologers, the parents invite their friends and acquaintances to celebrate the happy event. A number of priests are also invited, and these are responsible for the religious part of the programme.

On the day before all the guests assemble, and the child is arrayed in his best clothes, with glittering ornaments and rings on neck, arms, fingers, and toes. He is then placed on a raised dais. The priests recite prayers, drums and other instruments are played for all they are worth, hired actors perform dances and pantomimes, and the company eat, drink, and abandon themselves to all kinds of childish amusements.

The morning of the following day finds the object of the feast dressed in long white clothes and seated on a throne specially constructed for the occasion. The eldest of those present then goes forward with a large pair of scissors and cuts off the flower-decked top-knot. After that all the rest, beginning with the parents, pour bowls of

water over the head of the delinquent, who is soon drenched to the skin.

When the last bowl has been duly emptied amid laughter and jokes, the child is allowed to depart, reappearing shortly after in his very best Sunday clothes, or, if these are not fine enough, in a hired costume. Now the more pleasant part of the ceremony begins. Seated on his throne, around which flowers and fruit have been placed as offerings to the spirits of the air, he receives all kinds of presents from the company, chiefly in money. If the family is rich and has a large circle of friends, the sum collected in this way may be very considerable, a circumstance which is of some importance in view of approaching marriage.

The whole is concluded with a picturesque procession round the throne, during which the participants hold lighted candles in their hands. These are then blown out in such a way that the smoke passes over the place where the top-knot has been. In this way the child is thought to acquire enough courage and strength of will to last for the rest of his life. He may now look forward to the future with confidence, and need have no more fear of being disturbed by evil spirits which may have taken up their abode in his soul during childhood.

The top-knot is carefully preserved. All the short hairs are laid in a little boat made of the leaves of the plane-tree, which is allowed to drift

with the stream in the nearest river or canal. In thus drifting away it takes with it all the faults and bad qualities of the former owner of the hair. The long hairs, on the other hand, are kept until the youth makes his first pilgrimage to the "footprint of Buddha" at Prabat,¹ and are there offered to the priests, who make them into little brushes to dust the sanctuary with.

And as I am now on the subject of ceremonies—a subject, by the way, which plays a very important part in the life of the Siamese—I will briefly allude to two more of their customs.

In an open space in Bangkok stands an enormous gallows, about 100 feet high, which at first sight has a rather ghastly appearance. Is this where criminals are hanged? one involuntarily asks, for that seems to be its use.

The red scaffolding, however, serves a far more peaceful purpose. At about the time of our New Year a long swing is suspended from the top, and on a certain day the pleasure-seeking inhabitants of the city assemble to watch two men go through a breakneck performance in the swing, the object of which is to get hold of an article of value, which is temptingly held at some distance on the end of a long pole. One pair after another climbs up into the swing, until at last some one has succeeded in

¹ Prabat, a town in Northern Siam, where according to the legend Buddha left the impression of his foot in the rock. The "footprint" in question, however, is as large as an ordinary bath!

possessing himself of the coveted prize. The pretext for this curious ceremony is hard to make out, but it is celebrated as a harvest festival regularly every year, no matter whether the harvest has been good or bad.

As the gathering of the harvest is marked by popular rejoicing, so is its sowing celebrated with no less solemnity. A convenient field is chosen in the neighbourhood of the city, and thither wends a long procession of priests, officials, and spectators, led by the Minister of Agriculture, who is usually a member of the royal house. On arrival at the field the Minister lays hold of a plough, decorated with flowers and drawn by beribboned oxen, and ploughs the first furrow in person. He is followed by lines of parasol-bearers and other attendants, and a sower brings up the rear. It appears, however, that the ceremony has not had the desired effect of late years, as the harvests have failed in spite of it—a circumstance which in this agricultural country means an immense national loss.

After what I have now said about Siam, the reader probably thinks Bangkok is an ideal town and its people doubtless a set of lazy, but for all that quite sympathetic, revellers. The latter conclusion hits the mark entirely, but unfortunately the former does not. For, like all great cities, Bangkok has its shady side, which it would not be right to ignore altogether. And as I have always

held the opinion that before one can know a thing, one must have seen both its good and bad points, I went out one evening to make a study of the latter.

“What do you say to the insupportable mosquitoes and the enervating heat—are not these shady sides enough for you? Or the evil-smelling canals, where the pale phantom of fever lurks in the green slime, in company with decomposing cats, dogs, and other refuse?”—I hear one of my travelling companions ask in indignation.

No; these things, no doubt, are by no means pleasant, but in general they only concern Europeans, and it was not of them I wished to speak. Moreover, the medical reports of recent years have shown that Bangkok, far from being an unhealthy city, is superior from a sanitary point of view to a great many other places in the East.

The ramble on which I now propose to take the reader is of an entirely different kind, and is intended to show how a great part of the population owes its ruin to two causes in particular—opium and gambling. They are certainly not very edifying scenes that I have to show you, but, if you are not afraid of a little crude realism, come on.

As I mentioned in the first chapter, the Chief of Police of Bangkok was with us on board the *Kleist*, and it was under his guidance that I made a little round of the city's opium-dens and gambling-hells, a round which certainly no tourist has ever made before.

Late one evening we went off in a jingling rickshaw down the broad streets, which were brilliant with electric light. But soon we left these great arteries behind us and came into narrow, winding alleys, very sparsely illuminated by paper lanterns here and there before the doors. For it was the "shady side" we were bound for.

All was still and deserted. We scarcely met a human being, and only now and then the melancholy howling of a dog disturbed the silence. The low, ruinous houses became closer and closer, and their dark shutters grinned at us like the empty eye-sockets of a spectre. I had long ago lost the way, and would certainly never have been able to get out of this winding labyrinth by myself. The lanes became ever narrower, and the neighbourhood ever more mysterious and ugly. It was a good thing to have the Chief of Police in one's company and a Browning pistol in one's hip-pocket.

The rickshaw stopped with a jerk outside a gate, over which dangled an oblong lantern with big Chinese characters. "Opium," whispered my companion, pointing to a sign on the right of the door.

Through a narrow passage, so low that I had to bend down, we came into a dimly lighted den. I was met by a sweetish, choking atmosphere, and the whole room was veiled in a blue mist, which at first prevented me from distinguishing any definite object. Then by degrees my eyes accustomed

themselves to the darkness, and I saw a wrinkled old Chinaman with big horn spectacles and a waxy yellow skin — the proprietor of the opium-den. With a humble air he carried on a long conversation with the dreaded Chief of Police, twisting his hands all the time, as though in despair. The result was that he took us into an adjoining room, only separated from the first by a thin curtain.

Here the atmosphere was if possible more suffocating. On low couches along the walls lay a number of half-naked Siamese, enjoying to the full the narcotic poison of opium. Before each of them stood a little lamp, which was used in preparing the poison. A certain quantity of opium is taken up on a pin and rolled in a flame until it acquires the proper degree of viscosity. The shaky fingers have difficulty in holding the little black pill in its place ; they long to put it into the pipe, so that the system may soon receive its indispensable dose of the slow poison. For he who has once become a slave to the vice of opium can only be set free by death. He begins gradually with one pipe. Soon he takes one more, and before the unfortunate man knows what he is doing he lies all day long in a state of torpid indifference, taking one whiff after another, and now and then dropping into a doze, full of all kinds of voluptuous hallucinations and dreams.

Next the entrance lay a young man, with languid, though still intelligent features. He had

begun to smoke at the age of twenty, and was now in his fifth year of it. My companion asked what had been the cause of his resorting to this means of gratification. The answer was brief and significant: "Me love fine girl, she no want me. Me begin smoke opium." And with a long pull at his pipe he closed his dim eyes, clearly showing that he had no intention of continuing the conversation.

With a shudder I turned away from this place, and was glad to get into the rickshaw again. But if, as my companion assured me, this den was one of the "better" ones, what can the hundreds of other similar places have been like? One was enough for me.

Off we went again through the winding streets, and our human steed dropped into his usual jog-trot. It cannot be said that these coolies are short-distance sprinters, but they have immense powers of endurance, and if they would take the trouble to train, would certainly come out well in a Marathon race. Our surroundings became more and more civilised, and soon we crossed a couple of the city's arteries.

Our goal was now one of the large gambling-halls, a good-sized building which soon appeared in front of the rickshaw, barring the way.

Here was life and movement, and in the narrow gateway Chinese and Siamese rubbed shoulders in motley confusion. Some were going, others arriving; but it struck me that the greater number were

arriving, and were in such a hurry that they caused violent collisions in the narrow passage. We followed the stream, and, side by side with a couple of seedy individuals, in whose belts two long knives were gleaming, we made our entry into this Siamese Monte Carlo.

An immense hall with a corrugated iron roof and trellis-work instead of walls lay before us. A few flaring paraffin-lamps shed an uncertain light over the players, who sat in groups on the dirty cement floor, sometimes with a ragged straw mat under them. The noisy hum was hushed for a moment at our entrance, and every one turned his head to look at the white men who had ventured to intrude into this privileged resort of the yellow race. But soon the play was in full swing again, and even the bitterest thoughts about the insolence of prying Occidentals gave way before the goddess of Fortune.

Here I had the opportunity of really seeing samples of all that Bangkok could show in the way of rascality, and I doubt whether even the London Docks could produce a more complete collection of criminal physiognomies. By far the greater part of them were Chinese and Siamese, men and women, the latter often with a little child at the breast. But they had to gamble, and gamble they did; and that the family's last farthings were swept up by the long-fingered croupiers was a matter of daily occurrence. The usual end of the

story is a watery grave in one of the numerous canals.

A few Laos, tattooed all over their bodies, were also to be seen here and there. But these seemed to take things more calmly, and generally kept to themselves in small groups.

Everywhere cigarettes were smoked and betel chewed. Klitch, klatch, one heard incessantly on the cement floor, and had to pick one's way among red patches that gleamed like blood.

I went up to a big octagonal table with a green cloth, which seemed to be the centre of all things, as it had the largest number of people round it. Close by, on a high stool, was enthroned a Chinaman who superintended the table, and below him sat the man who managed the actual play. The method of this was to take a chance quantity of small mussel-shells out of a bag and pile them up on the table. These were then arranged in heaps of four. The last heap was the decisive one: if it contained one shell, No. 1 won; if two shells, No. 2; and so on. There were thus only four numbers to bet on, but the bank only paid three times the stake.

Slowly and deliberately the counting went on. The eyes of all were fixed on the little white objects, upon which perhaps the life of one or another depended. Now it will soon be done—No. 3 wins, and the silver pieces rattle under the long rakes of the croupiers and are divided

among the lucky winners. Then an unusual thing happened—the bank was broken. Yells, cries, and oaths! The matter seemed to be easily put right, however, as after some parleying a big bag was hauled out from under the table, and its jingling contents rolled across the green cloth to him who had put a whole fortune on No. 3 and thus brought about this unlooked-for incident. He was a little Chinese, with blinking oblique eyes. With the most unconcerned air in the world he roped in his rich plunder, which quickly disappeared in the folds of his dirty shirt—and the game went on as if nothing had happened.

There were two of these green tables in the hall, and it was there that the great *coups* were made. But another game of hazard was also carried on *con amore*. It was chiefly with this that all the other groups on the floor were occupied.

These more modest gamblers squatted round a simple straw mat, on which a big chalk cross was drawn, and it was mostly copper coins and half-ticals that changed hands here. A teetotum marked with Chinese characters was placed by the croupier in a square metal holder, which was deposited on the mat in the centre of the cross and then spun round. The position of the teetotum when the lid was taken off determined which of the players had won.

This, as will be seen, was a very simple kind of roulette, but it appeared to be most in favour with the crowd of fortune-seekers. Or was it,

perhaps, because it was easier to cheat here than at the green table?

A few years ago there were not less than about twenty of such gambling-halls in Bangkok, but the Government realised their bad effect on the national character and closed more than half. Now there are only two or three left, owned of course by Chinese, who pay to the Crown a tax of several millions of ticals annually for the privilege. Once it was even attempted to close all the rooms, but this resulted in some rioting and general ferment in the city, the consequence of which was that they had to be opened again immediately. Now play goes on without a break all through the twenty-four hours.

Besides these games of hazard there is also a great money lottery with a draw once a week, at which considerable sums may be won and lost. The Siamese is born with a taste for gambling, and he is given ample opportunity of satisfying it.

CHAPTER VII

EXCURSIONS IN THE COUNTRY DISTRICTS

ONE of the most noteworthy places in Siam is certainly its old capital, Ayuthia, situated about forty-five miles up the river Menam; and it was to visit these ancient ruins that we took the train one fine morning from Bangkok. Formerly the journey occupied three or four days and was not without its hardships—small and poor rowing-boats, no hotel, and nothing to eat. But now the railway takes you there in two hours, and you can quite well be back in Bangkok the same afternoon.

The landscape flew past the broad windows of the comfortable, but rather shaky saloon carriage in a panorama of different shades of green. But it was unreasonably monotonous: as far as the eye could reach there was nothing to be seen but rice. Hardly an inch of uncultivated ground could be discovered, and rice is the one and only feature of the fertile plain of the Menam. If the crop fails, the whole country is plunged into financial difficulties; if it is good, the people rejoice, and their prosperity advances by leaps and bounds.

It is true that the generosity of the rich soil

is seconded by none but the most primitive agricultural implements, the nature and form of which have certainly not changed much during the last hundred years; but the earth itself does the chief share, assisted in this by its best ally, water. For at certain seasons of the year the rice must stand under water, and an elaborate system of canals intersects the country in all directions. History relates that the whole of this irrigation system traces its origin to the days of the adventurer Phaulkon.

Only here and there a few green clumps of bamboo show up in the landscape, where one has a glimpse of the small huts of the natives, like peaked beehives, but otherwise, as I have said, it is hopelessly flat. Everywhere herds of tame buffaloes are to be seen, idly enjoying their siesta in the muddy pools, with their backs and heads, crowned by the curved horns, just showing above the surface of the water. On their backs sit either a naked brown boy or an egret or two, for these birds are very fond of using these movable perches to pick up their food for the day. Meditative herons and other waders are mirrored in the canals, while snipe constantly fly up in front of the rattling train.

I was out one day shooting birds among these fields. The bag was a small one, but on the other hand the exercise was grand. For wading through swampy fields, where you often sink into mud and

water up to the knees, and where at every other step you run the risk of going headlong into a hole or seeing a snake wriggle away under your eyes, is no doubt very interesting, but far from lazy work.

Some row-boats were waiting to take us through winding canals to Ayuthia. This is a typical river-town, which consists almost entirely of floating houses; in fact, it may almost be doubted whether any part of the community lives on dry land. So closely did these quaint dwellings lie, that it was all our narrow craft could do to pilot itself among them, in spite of the fact that a police-boat went in advance to shove aside the most bulky of the houses and thus widen the "street." The floats of these houses usually consist of big bamboo rafts, upon which are erected square boxes of the same material with thatched roofs. In front of the door is a broad landing-stage, upon which the inmates, together with their dogs, cats, and poultry, appear to enjoy an existence as untroubled as it is inactive. With the inevitable lotus cigar or quid of betel in their mouths, they followed our advancing boats with feeble interest, while the children splashed about in the water like big brown fish, more at home in this element than on land. But the bank itself, on which thick clumps of bamboo were growing, seemed almost uninhabited. Only here and there could one discern the curving lines of a temple or the spire of a white pagoda.



OUR ELEPHANTS AT AVUTHIA.



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

By degrees the rows of floating houses became thinner, and we landed at the spot where in the year 1350 King Uthong founded the first real capital of the ancient Thai nation, Ayuthia.

Of all the splendour and magnificence that formerly prevailed, of all the majestic buildings, palaces, and temples which once reared their proud forms with jewelled gateways and gilded pinnacles, nothing was now to be seen. For since the Burmese captured the city in 1767 and levelled it with the ground, it has never been rebuilt.

It is a desolate prospect of decay that meets the eye. Ruins and rubbish-heaps—rubbish-heaps and ruins. Dilapidated pagodas, shattered walls, plundered graves—everywhere the abomination of desolation, in the midst of which lianas and other creepers by clinging to the crevices do their share in the work of destruction. On the ground lie decorative fragments and mutilated images of Buddha by the hundred, and now and then old tiles or bits of painted stucco are crunched beneath the elephants' feet.

We rode for a long time about the deserted ruins, which from an archæological point of view would certainly be a regular gold-mine to the interested explorer, and would supply material for bulky scientific works. All we could do was to note the entire lack of preservation, which is likely in the future to lead to the complete annihilation of the ancient monuments.

The journey home was made in rapid motor-boats. That these craft would raise a considerable sea in the sometimes rather narrow channel was only to be expected, and the consequence was a number of capsized boats and twisted houses. The natives, however, took these slight contretemps with the greatest calmness : all they had to do was to tip the boat right side up again, or give the house a half-turn round. But as for stopping or reducing speed on account of such trifles, that probably never occurred to the lofty minds of those in charge of the motor-boats.

On first arriving at Bangkok we had made inquiries about the possibility of making a little trip into the interior. For it was not in accordance with our plans to see Bangkok and Ayuthia only, and we wanted to visit some of the places that lie off the beaten track.

In reply a typewritten paper arrived a few days later, with a long programme, giving details of the arrangements made by our kind, hospitable and obliging hosts. Every imaginable comfort was provided, and we ourselves had only to fold our arms and wait for the day of departure. It was really an extraordinary degree of hospitality that was shown us in this journey—a hospitality for which I must be doubly grateful, for without it we should no doubt have been obliged, like the other Coronation guests, to go straight back from Bangkok. However, if I had guessed the extent

of the trouble I was giving, my modesty would certainly have forbidden me even to hint at such an expedition. The reader may judge for himself by what follows.

A special train took us one sultry afternoon from Bangkok in a westerly direction, or, more precisely, to the little station of Wung Ma Now, situated on the picturesque river Rathburi.

Here came the first surprise. No fewer than twenty different house-boats lay waiting at specially constructed landing-stages of bamboo, which were protected from the burning rays of the sun by airy roofs covered with banana-leaves. "Every one his own boat" was the arrangement, and there were in addition reserve, tug, and kitchen boats.

It was thus quite a little flotilla that had been mobilised, and this for a journey of only two days, since by the following afternoon we were due at Rathburi, where we were to join the railway again. As regards the boats themselves, they were arranged entirely on the Siamese pattern : a single large cabin, so low that one could only crawl about on all-fours. A mattress on the floor, a miniature washing-stand that would have suited a doll's house, and a few soft mats and cushions completed the fittings. It should be said that the Siamese always sit on the floor when at home, for which reason it was unnecessary to build the boats any higher.

My own craft, however, was rather more fortunately disposed in this respect, as besides the low

room there was also an ordinary cabin, with space even for a bed. On the roof were a table and chairs, and over all a wide, brightly coloured awning.

What a magnificent trip it was! The boat glided noiselessly with the stream, steered and paddled by eight powerful rowers in naval uniform. I sat on the roof and watched the landscape slipping past : now great plains, where rice reigned supreme ; now bamboos dipping their tender leaves in the water ; now jungle covering both banks, with monkeys gaily swinging from branch to branch, or parrots uttering their shrill cries. Now and then we met large boats, laden to the water's edge with fruit and bananas ; and among them gleaming kingfishers in their green plumage dived after small floundering fish, of which the river seemed to be full. Sometimes great shoals of these jumped out of the water, usually pursued by some larger fish, which immediately afterwards gave an elegant leap, flashed, and disappeared again below the calm surface. All this, in conjunction with a sinking sun, which wrapped the landscape in a rosy mist and coloured the sky in tints ranging from the brightest purple to the darkest green, gave a dreamlike effect to the scene, full of the profoundest peace and harmony.

On the approach of darkness we made fast to the shore for the night. The dinner-table was already laid for us under some palms (how it had

got there before us is still a mystery to me), and the whole place was gleaming in the white light of great, ultra-modern acetylene lamps. Fires were burning everywhere, round which the Siamese later on sat in picturesque groups, frying fish or performing on some of their squeaky stringed instruments, while young girls from the nearest village executed strange, sinuous dances.

On the following morning the glorious voyage was resumed. Wherever it had been arranged that we should land, stages had been constructed with projecting roofs, so that the whole boat might lie in shade. On these occasions it often happened that the natives came down with presents of fruit, eggs, fowls, monkeys and parrots.

In the evening we arrived at Rathburi, a typical small Siamese town, and were saluted by the garrison, which formed a guard of honour at the landing-place, with colours and band. The latter played incessantly all the evening, and even after I had gone to bed the ear-splitting tones of the murdered Swedish National Anthem resounded in the stillness of the night.

Otherwise the town offered little of interest : a few tortuous and dirty streets, and a large market-place, where the products of the country, together with a number of wild animals, were offered for sale, made up all there was to see.

Next morning, then, at an early hour, we were already on our way in a shaky train—of course

after a farewell, as well-meant as it was noisy, from the guard of honour and its band—southward towards the Malay Peninsula. The line is intended at some future date to be continued as far as Muang Kow on the west coast, so as to receive traffic direct from Europe and avoid the middlemen of Singapore.

The everlasting rice-fields gave way by degrees to coco-nut plantations, while the ground became more rocky and the soil drier. And when at last the train stopped at a little place in the middle of the line, we had the finest sea-sand under our feet.

Hua Hin was the name on the crooked bamboo station, and alongside it a whole caravan of Siamese saddle-ponies and fine big buffalo-carts was waiting. These soon took us through dry scrubs to the shore, where the finest beach of white sand extended to a crystal sea. A refreshing sea-breeze was blowing, which agreeably cooled our heated brows after a long and dusty railway journey.

Only some ten yards from the breaking waves a little camp had been pitched, with each tent larger and more magnificent than the others. Here again the rule was "Every man his own tent," and it should be noted that two days before our arrival the place was nothing but a wilderness covered with brushwood, that had never yet been touched by the hand of civilisation. Here, then, nimble hands had carried out a piece of work which any-

where else would certainly have taken at least a week.

The days we passed in this glorious spot were perhaps the pleasantest of the whole trip. Bracing sea air, long rides on the sands or through dense jungle, refreshing baths, and finally a *dolce far niente* before the tent door in the cool of the evening — what more could one ask?

During this time I also had the opportunity of roaming in search of game over the hills, thickly overgrown with jungle, which rear their rounded summits a short distance inland. But the game evidently did not share my opinion that this would be an ideal place for them, as, after three days of unsparing pains on the part of sportsmen and beaters, the bag was a fairly small one. This was to some extent due to the natives' want of practice at the business. Since their religion forbids taking life, sport is at a very low ebb in Siam, and not many Europeans have ever had the chance of shooting big game there.

For all that, these rambles through field and forest afforded special enjoyment to the lover of Nature; for, even if the coveted game does not come within range, there is nothing better, nothing more attractive, than to roam on untrodden paths alone with one's gun, listening to the murmuring song of the jungle or the mysterious rustling of the bamboo thicket. Only at such a time does a

man feel his own littleness, and what an infinite lesson he has to learn from Nature.

The only big game we got was a handsome old Sambur stag, which fell to a successful shot from my inseparable friend and fellow-sportsman, G. C. L. For as soon as there was talk of shooting, the Master of Aske was always on the spot, active and energetic as ever ; we often camped in the most impossible places, and many were the hardships we went through, but we always enjoyed ourselves together, and I should like here to record my warm thanks to the best comrade I know for the sport we have shared, whether in the jungles and sun-baked plains of Siam, Cochin-China, or India.

Besides this, we shot a quantity of birds and small game. The former especially were to be found in great variety, from small scuttling hoopoes to the big wild hens (*Gallus gallus*). These latter are so puzzlingly like the usual barn-door variety that I gave a regular start the first time one of the cocks came sailing along in the sunshine, crowing with outstretched wings. Reddish-brown in colour, it might have come from any farm in Sweden.

My secret hope from the first had been to get a chance of shooting tigers, which were said to be abundant. And there were certainly some about,—the day before our arrival one of the big cats had been out trying to snatch an ox just outside the camp,—but on account of their cowardice, especially

in the daytime, all my expectations were unfortunately defeated. In one single drive, though, we had a tiger surrounded, and I will now describe how he escaped our rifles.

The scene of the drive was a rough and rocky piece of mountain. I was standing below on a little open space, only separated from the former by some impenetrable thickets of bamboo. Two hundred yards to the right of me, behind another thicket, stood the Vice-Governor of the province, an old Siamese, armed with nothing but an ancient shot-gun. With him was a native hunter.

We had to wait a long time before the monkeys set up their furious howls—a sure sign of a tiger or leopard in the neighbourhood—and came scuttling down towards the place where I stood.

“Here we are at last!” I thought, and, with my heavy cordite rifle ready, I waited in eager anticipation of what was coming. But nothing came! I heard the beaters coming nearer and nearer, and no shot was fired—soon they came right up.

But then there was some excitement on the right wing where the old Siamese stood. Everybody rushed there, and when I came up I found him in agitated conversation with Phya Mahibal—in parenthesis, the only one of the Siamese who was a real sportsman. From him I afterwards learned the following rich story.

To all appearance the tiger must have passed within a few yards of the place where I stood, but

inside the dense bamboo thicket, so that I could not see him. From there he had proceeded straight out towards the agitated Vice-Governor, crouched at a distance of barely ten yards, and surveyed for a moment this obstacle to his progress. The obstacle, on his part, dared not fire his old shotgun, but stood motionless, though with rather shaky knees. However, the hunter behind him knew what to do. He took a box of matches out of his pocket and struck two or three of them at once. This was enough to scare away the enemy. There was a furious snarl—and with a leap the tiger was back in the jungle, from which he broke out again through the thicket between the Governor and me, without my seeing so much as the animal's tail.

That was a real piece of bad luck—the same sort of luck that afterwards attended all my tiger-hunts. And unattractive as were the outward habiliments of the worthy Vice-Governor, I would nevertheless have given a good deal to have been in his clothes on that occasion.

But those divine days by the sea gradually drew to a close, and one morning we said good-bye with sorrow and regret to the camp at Hua Hin. The same afternoon we arrived at the little town of Petshaburi, situated at the foot of the first spurs of the Tenasserim range.

Here, on the top of a verdant knoll, the old King Mongkut had built a small palace, which

formed the favourite residence of the Court during the latter part of his life. But since the death of Chulalongkorn it had remained uninhabited, and we were the first guests to move in.

The road up to it was steep, and we were carried from the foot of the hill to the top in small palanquins ; the bearers wore the dress of the Laos, a long black coat with red embroidery. From the summit there was a magnificent view over cultivated land, with here and there a slender palm-tree ; and on the horizon gleamed the broad mirror of the Gulf of Siam.

The town of Petshaburi itself offers little of interest, but all the more famous are the two ancient cave-temples of Ham Kow Luang and Ham Kow Bandai, situated not far away. The first-named in particular would seem to be unique of its kind. Descending a steep and narrow flight of steps, cut out of the rock, you arrive at the imposing sanctuary, which is so large that an ordinary two-storeyed house could easily be placed inside it. After the dazzling sunlight outside, it takes some time for the eyes to accustom themselves to the meagre half-light which finds its way in through a partly overgrown hole in the roof. But by degrees the huge dimensions of the cave appear, and one fantastic group of stalactites after another emerges from the surrounding darkness, while from every corner, every ledge, every niche or crevice in the rock, round faces of Buddha gaze fixedly at the

visitor. Everywhere these figures are standing, sitting, or lying, and their number appears to be endless. Little brackets of pebbles and mortar hang everywhere like swallows' nests upon the rugged walls, each supporting its more or less artistic image; and on the floor, which in recent times has been paved with slabs of stone, stand long rows of the idols, as if drawn up on parade. At one end gleam three whitewashed pagodas, which have the effect of gigantic sugar-loaves.

Originally of volcanic origin, it is uncertain when these caves began to be used as temples. In some of them ancient stone tablets have been found with Pali inscriptions dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D., but otherwise nothing seems to be known regarding their real age. As there is no attempt at architectural ornament in the interior of the caves, no clue is to be looked for in this quarter. But that they are not things of yesterday is shown by the numerous stalactites and by the way in which the steps in the rock have been worn in the course of centuries by the bare feet of the faithful.

During our stay at Petshaburi I had the opportunity one afternoon of witnessing a genuine Siamese harvest festival, with its accompanying amusements.

The inhabitants of the town had assembled to a man round a rice-field, which was just ready for reaping. Clad in their best holiday *panungs*, a band

of women advanced, and set to work with a will to cut the yellow ears with short, broad-bladed knives. Amid laughter and singing the work went like a dance, and in less than an hour the whole field was reaped. Meanwhile the spectators amused themselves with cock-fighting, or made bets as to which of two "fighting-fish" would bite the other to death. These are silvery little creatures which are caught in the rivers and have a great propensity for fighting; when two of them are put into the same glass bowl the affair never ends without at least one of the combatants being left "on the field," usually after a long and sanguinary struggle which dyes the water light red. There were also races with oxen. These were harnessed three abreast to gaudily painted two-wheeled cars, something like Roman chariots, on which a shouting Siamese held the reins and whip. Three of these vehicles took part in each race, and covered the course of about 200 yards at a surprising speed. Sometimes the charioteers were unable to stop their impetuous coursers, which went on at a furious pace over the fields, until a ditch or a tree checked their further progress.

Finally, on the following day, the threshing took place, a procedure which would certainly have raised a storm of surprise and indignation among our highly civilised agriculturists at home. The rice was spread out in a wide circle in the middle of the field, and in the centre of this circle a post

was driven firmly into the ground, richly decorated with ribbons and paper flowers. A rope about fifty yards long was attached to the post, and to this rope were fastened some twenty oxen abreast, whose hoofs were to do the actual work of threshing. And with the post as its centre the whole machine started off just like a merry-go-round. The unfortunate rice flew all over the place in a cloud of dust, but what was left of it must surely have been well and thoroughly threshed. The pace became hotter and hotter, till the outside animals could go no faster, and generally broke loose and went off at a tangent among the spectators, occasioning panic and exclamations the reverse of friendly. The merry-go-round was stopped for a moment, fresh animals were put in, and then it went off again with renewed vigour. How much of the rice was finally left on the battlefield after this somewhat rough treatment I was unfortunately unable to observe, as darkness had already come on before the last round had been accomplished.

There was also another reason which forced me to leave. The chief of a neighbouring Laos village had invited our party to a torch-dance the same evening, and of course such a spectacle was not to be missed.

When we arrived, the whole place was brightly illuminated, and the elders of the village advanced with presents of flowers and old silver coins to welcome "the white Chief from the North" and

his Princess. Then followed an exhibition of sports, one of which was identical with Swedish schoolboys' ball-throwing, except that the ball here used consisted of rolled-up hides wound round with coco-nut fibre.

It was indeed a picturesque scene that presented itself in the moonlight. The small, low cabins were everywhere hung with coloured lanterns, and in the middle of the open space a big bonfire was blazing. Here the rest of the inhabitants moved about like black shadows, and in a place specially railed off the women sat spinning or dressing yarn. Both sexes are dressed alike in a sort of long black shirt with red embroideries and insertions. And among their handiwork and household goods I found many objects which showed a striking similarity to those of the Lapps—a very singular circumstance, surely. Perhaps some inquirer may be able to throw light on it.

The visit concluded with a torchlight procession, in which all the inhabitants of the village took part, the women first, then the men. The torches were in the shape of lotus-flowers, which were lighted from within by small coco-nut-oil lamps of different colours.

On our way back to Bangkok we stayed one day at the new King's favourite country place, Pra Patom, situated close to a fair-sized town of the same name. An exhibition of bridging by "Wild Tigers" was got up in our honour, the work being

directed by the King in person. Everything went with admirable precision and rapidity, but then the material—bamboo—was the best imaginable for such an object.

Pra Patom is otherwise chiefly remarkable for its ancient pagoda, which is said to be the oldest in the kingdom. Erected at the beginning of the seventh century A.D., it has been so much added to and rebuilt that of the original edifice only the foundations now remain. The whole building, which reaches the respectable height of 300 feet, is covered with old yellowish-grey Chinese tiles, which give it an extremely picturesque and characteristic appearance. Unfortunately here, as in the case of other ancient Siamese monuments, a sad state of decay prevails, and the tiles are allowed to become loose one by one and be dashed to pieces on the stony ground. For several years there have been thoughts of repairing this, perhaps the first monument of Siamese civilisation, but unfortunately nothing has yet been done.

This pagoda is said to contain some of Buddha's hairs, and there is also attached to it a mystical phenomenon, closely connected with the kings of Siam. It is related that each of the three last heirs to the throne, about a year before his accession, saw the top of the pagoda illumined at night by a bluish-white glimmer, which could not be explained from natural causes. This prodigy is now regarded as a sure omen of the King's early

death and a hint to his heir to prepare himself for his approaching exalted office. The present sovereign, who mentioned the story to me, also saw the same light shortly before his father died, and he pointed out among his suite several witnesses who had been present, and who all attested the occurrence on oath. I have no reason to doubt the truth of the story, as King Vajiravudh is far from superstitious or fanciful in such matters, but on the contrary very reserved and sober-minded.

Shortly before Christmas we again arrived at Bangkok, and there celebrated, as well as circumstances permitted, a warm, but none the less hearty midwinter festival together with all the Swedes living at Bangkok. Neither stockfish, ham, nor porridge was missing from the Christmas dinner, though the first of these had only been fished that morning out of the muddy waters of the Menam, and the last had only the name in common with the corresponding dish at home.

CHAPTER VIII

BUFFALO SHOOTING ON THE KORAT PLATEAU

It had long been my wish to get up to the mountain plateaux in the interior of the country, and this for two reasons: first, to penetrate if possible even farther beyond the boundaries of civilisation than had been the case in the foregoing trip; and secondly, to endeavour to bring down a specimen of the extremely rare Siamese wild buffalo, which, according to the meagre information I succeeded in getting in Bangkok, is said to be still found on the tablelands in the eastern part of the country.

At first those concerned shook their heads in doubt when I proposed this plan, thinking it would be far too dangerous, and would moreover entail severe hardships. But as my sporting instinct is not so easily restrained, but on the contrary was even more fired by the difficulties foreshadowed, and as my hosts at last discovered that I was really bent on a life in the open, they gradually resigned themselves and nodded approval. And when that was once settled, they spared no pains to arrange everything in the best possible way.

In order to avoid all elaborate preparations, I

tried to impress upon them that the trip was of an entirely private nature, and was only being made for purposes of sport and in order to see more of the country.

"Everything shall be arranged according to your wishes," was the reply ; "and the authorities shall be informed of the unofficial character of the journey."

"Then what is the difference between official and unofficial?" I asked, with some suspicion.

"If the journey were official, all the authorities would be *obliged* to present themselves at every place you passed. Now there will be no obligation, but they will be there all the same."

So there was no getting off with less, and a fine afternoon at the end of December found Lewenhaupt and me at the railway station of Korat surrounded by all the notabilities of the town, while the inevitable guard of honour with band and colours was drawn up on the platform, trying with praiseworthy energy to coax the Swedish National Anthem out of its discordant brass instruments.

We had left Bangkok the same morning by special train and followed the eastern main line to its terminus, Korat. The first part of the journey, with its endless plains of rice-fields, was anything but interesting. But when, after Saraburi, the country began to rise and the railway wound along steep-sided valleys, where the jungle formed a dense wall on each side of the line and the flora became

more and more luxuriant, with bright splashes of colour of orchids and other flowering creepers, the interest increased in proportion as Nature became wilder and more primitive. The violent shaking of the train at the sharp curves also contributed to this, as it at least compelled some interest in one's own person, unless one preferred to sit on the floor once for all. At home one would certainly have long ago seized the communication-cord with trembling hands. And after a journey which was thus agitating in a double sense, we found ourselves on the eastern tableland and in the little provincial town of Korat.

The latter is properly speaking an important garrison, as no fewer than four regiments are quartered there. As we were lodged with the Commandant of the place, I had the opportunity in the course of the afternoon of inspecting some of the rather poor and wretched barracks. Although spacious enough in appearance, they were nevertheless so cramped for space that thirty cots in two rows, one above the other, were crowded into a barrack-room of which the Swedish Militia would have complained if ten men had been put into it. All that the Crown supplies for these hard wooden beds is a blanket and a pillow as hard as a stone.

That night I did not sleep at all, as a big *to-kai* had its nest in a hollow tree-trunk just outside the window, and entertained me with its

shrill shrieks until sunrise. Of these unattractive lizards the Siamese have a story that their livers grow so fast that once a year—when they shriek most—a little wood-worm darts into their mouths, eats up a sufficient quantity of the troublesome organ, and then goes off again, having duly performed its mission. My tormentor that night must have had an unusually big liver and wanted his worm badly.

With our departure from Korat next morning we also said good-bye to civilisation proper, for now our road lay in an easterly direction through miles of jungle to a little town called Pi Mai, situated on one of the upper streams of the Se-mun River and about sixty miles from Korat. I say "road," for there was really a newly constructed road for the whole of this distance ; so new that the bridges were still absent, and the track actually consisted only of a loose layer of sand. In three days, however, temporary bridges had been put up by the garrison of Korat, and thanks to them we were able to accomplish the long journey by motor-car. I have never driven on a road less suited for this means of progression, and it was only after getting stuck several times in the bottomless sand and bursting two tyres that we arrived that afternoon at Pi Mai. We had been surrounded the whole time by dense jungle, alternating with narrow open glades where the grass grew as high as a man, and it was therefore a welcome sight to have human habitations

once more before us, even if these were of the most primitive kind.

The little community certainly bears the official appellation of "town," but by no means deserves this rank. A few small, low bamboo houses forming two winding village streets, where fowls and oxen supply the place of pedestrians—that is all. But the little town can nevertheless boast *one* sight—the ruins of a Brahman temple two thousand years old, which formerly reared its proud pinnacles of sandstone high above the dark depths of the surrounding jungle. Its massive foundations still remain, as well as part of the richly sculptured lower galleries, but otherwise it is nothing but a desolate sea of stone, which however occupies a considerable area. The legend relates that the original buildings formed the model for the great and mighty temple-city of Angkor in Cambodia.

In a cosy and perfectly new house of mahogany (a wood that grows here in great quantities) we passed a short night, for at 3.30 the following morning we were already in the saddle on our way to the pastures of the wild buffalo, where it was important to arrive before sunrise.

Having been endowed by Nature with a somewhat tall and lanky frame, and being besides anything but a horsy man, I can only ascribe it to the little Siamese pony's phenomenal sureness of foot that I ever reached the open prairies. For the only light there was consisted of an extremely

smoky torch, which the guide persisted in holding just under my pony's nose, so that both he and I had constant fits of the most violent coughing and sneezing.

The journey began with a hip-bath, as we had to ford a river, the water of which reached the ponies' saddles. Then came an advance across ground covered with brushwood, where impertinent boughs continually struck the riders in the face, and finally a masterly balancing act (by our ponies, of course) over some very long and narrow bridges, which, not to mention the fact that they possessed no railing, consisted entirely of loose pieces of wood laid at random over two parallel tree-trunks, on each side of which a black, muddy stream could now and then be seen in the flickering torchlight—and we were out on the great plains. Here our pace was increased, and just at sunrise we reached Ban Chee-wan, a conglomeration of about twenty huts in the middle of the plain, which passed as a "village." Here it was that the elephants were to meet us, and it was not long before Lewenhaupt, Phya Mahibal, and the undersigned sat each in his rolling, swaying, oscillating howdah.

The first half-hour on the back of an elephant seems particularly attractive and agreeable; you look down at the world below you with the feelings of the lord of an impregnable moving castle, and indulge in all kinds of pleasant meditations. But soon these are of a less agreeable sort, and after

riding a couple of hours, your only desire on earth is to feel firm ground under your feet once more. For the continual movement, the swaying backwards and forwards each time the colossus moves his great limbs with easy, regular action, results in a feeling of tenderness all over, and you think you are coming in half. Add to this the fact that the platform of the howdah consists of nothing but thin strips of bamboo without any lining, and you will have an idea of the not altogether unmixed delight of riding on an elephant.

But our business was shooting buffalo, and so I clenched my teeth and rode on.

The broad plain extended as far as the eye could see from east to west, while on the north and south it was bounded by forest or by scattered islands of jungle. Here and there were a few lonely bushes ; otherwise the sandy soil was thickly overgrown with short, rough grass. Large tracts were black from prairie fires—the natives set fire to the grass to get a better growth—and in many places huge pillars of smoke rose to the sky.

But what was this ? Four black bodies suddenly rose from the grass, and four pairs of semicircular horns were turned towards my advancing elephant. The long-looked-for big game at last !

The range was still too great, but after all the terrible stories I had been treated to in Bangkok I had no doubt that in a few seconds the buffaloes would come on in a mad charge and try to upset

my elephant. My heavy cordite rifle was resting on the edge of the howdah, and I sat with all my nerves at full-cock, awaiting the attack. Slowly the distance between us was decreased. The animals still stood their ground, staring me in the face. The nearest bull began to be uneasy, stamped on the ground, and flung his mighty head hither and thither. Now, I thought, now they must be coming; now is the time to shoot straight and keep steady—but imagine my disappointment and surprise when, instead of attacking, the four animals turned rapidly about and went off at a sharp trot across the plain, where a few moments later they disappeared from view. I really felt so foolish that I could not help bursting into a fit of laughter. So this was the dreaded wild buffalo of Siam, which was said to attack every living thing that came in its way, and which no one ventured to hunt except from the back of an elephant.

Meanwhile I went on, and it was not long before two more buffaloes barred my way. Would these show themselves more aggressive, or should we see the same ignominious retreat as before? Unfortunately, these had no more fight in them than the others; they actually *galloped* away with their tails in the air when I came a little nearer. But this time I was prepared for all eventualities, and sent a bullet into the flank of one of them at long range, though without stopping him.

When the same manœuvre had been repeated

for the third time with a solitary beast, our patience came to an end, and Lewenhaupt and I decided to follow the animal on foot, as he had only run a few hundred yards and was still in sight. But that was no good either, for as soon as the buffalo fancied we must be within range he turned and disappeared in the direction of a pool, where the grass grew to the height of a man.

We determined to adopt other tactics. The ponies were sent for, and we rode on them to some bushes, not far from the spot where the bull had been seen last, while the elephants had orders to beat up the long grass in front.

This was more successful, and a few minutes later Lewenhaupt's first bullet lodged in the bull's shoulder, just as he was trying to reach the cover of the bushes. He staggered, received two more bullets, and disappeared in the brushwood, but was soon found half-dead about a hundred yards farther on, where he was dispatched with a shot in the chest.

We were in great spirits at this, and Lewenhaupt of course became the indisputable hero and Nimrod of the day. The animal turned out to be a young bull with a fine pair of horns, which at this moment forms part of the large and varied assortment of trophies at Aske Castle.

The natives then arrived with information that a big herd had been seen that morning near the village of Ban Krashorn, and we went on there



[Photo, G. Lewenhaupt.]

THE AUTHOR WITH HIS SIAMESE WILD BUFFALO.

[To face p. 132.]

TO WHOM
IT MAY CONCERN

without delay. But it was already dusk when we arrived and duly found the herd in question, which numbered between thirty and forty animals.

A finer sight I have seldom seen. The huge bodies of the animals shone silver-grey in the rays of the setting sun, while their heads and necks looked jet-black. Here and there a wet muzzle flashed or a pair of horns shone like polished ebony. But unfortunately they never came within range, and there was nothing for us to do but to turn and ride back to the camp, which had been pitched round an open *sālā* (resting-place for travellers) outside the village of Ban Chee-wan. As long as the light lasted, our ponies trotted as fast as their little legs could go, but soon darkness came on and forced us to reduce our pace. The crickets were chirping in the grass like tinkling sleigh-bells on a winter day in the North, and the horizon was coloured red with many prairie-fires, which gave the scene a weird and awe-inspiring effect. Not till two hours after sunset did we reach our own camp-fires, after a tiring but successful day of sixteen and a half hours. And perhaps I need scarcely add that our dinner that evening tasted unconscionably good.

The night was cool, and as we lay on the draughty floor of the open *sālā* we wanted all the blankets and rugs that were to be had to keep ourselves warm. But we slept all the better for that, and when the sun was up again we were already in the saddle, refreshed and ready for the toils of

another day. But the extraordinary thing was that the same ponies that had carried us, with very few breaks, for sixteen hours the day before, appeared to be just as fresh as ourselves. The stamina of these little animals really approaches the incredible. For not only did they carry us that morning to Ban Krashorn (12 miles), but we afterwards rode from there, first to the camp, and on the following morning all the way back to Pi Mai (25 miles), still on the same ponies.

Not far from the camp two solitary young bulls were sighted, and now it was my turn to bring down one of them, after stalking him for a good while. This one had decidedly more malicious intentions, and tried several times to attack after the first bullet; but his strength failed him, and after a further greeting from the carbine in the shoulder-blade, he thought proper to give up the attempt, and with it the ghost.

Our plan for the day, however, was to try to get at the big herd at Ban Krashorn; on arriving there we again mounted the elephants, which had passed the night at the village, and rode out towards the buffaloes, which were still grazing where we had left them. In order to force an attack, an enveloping movement was made, so that we had the herd between the village and ourselves. But even this was no use. Led by two big bulls with enormous horns, the whole herd made off to one side before we came within range. We did manage

to wound one of them severely, but unfortunately he got away.

We then tried to adopt the same tactics as the day before, but this was also a failure. The curious thing happened, however, that the elephants—which had been relieved of their howdahs so that they might move faster—were now attacked by the two big bulls and forced to fly for cover behind some trees. It was a most extraordinary spectacle, full of imposing and irresistible force, but it did not help the sportsmen to come any nearer their game. However, the herd became scattered in the general confusion that ensued, and we set out in pursuit of a group that was flying over the plain. Among these animals was a little calf, which gradually dropped behind, and at last, dead-beat, allowed itself to be caught with ease. Amid the most distressing bleats it was duly photographed, and then set at liberty.

Meanwhile the rest of the herd was going farther and farther away, and soon the great prairie, that had lately been the scene of so much life and movement, was perfectly empty and deserted. The sun had long since passed the zenith, and there was nothing for us to do but to return to camp.

As I rode through the village of Ban Krashorn, I happened to see how the natives fish in shallow streams. Their method was unquestionably a primitive one, though evidently profitable, as one

silvery little fish after another was drawn up. The simple tackle consisted merely of small, half-spherical baskets, at the bottom of which was a hole, large enough for a child's hand. For it was exclusively the younger generation that took part in the fishing, splashing about in the little river with *panungs* tucked up to the waist. The actual catching was done simply by plunging the basket as quick as lightning against the bottom, after which the hand was thrust in through the hole to feel whether there were any fish inside. In this way the stream was searched in all directions with, as I said, good results.

The following forenoon found us back at Pi Mai. The zealous little Vice-Governor of the district had arranged a boxing competition in my honour, and all that the place could show in human or animal shape assembled on the open space outside my quarters. There may have been a couple of hundred people in the crowd, all squatting on their haunches and waiting with stoical calm for the popular sport to begin.

After a while, three pairs of quaintly costumed individuals entered the arena, one of them a grey-headed old fellow of at least fifty. Red or green fillets were wound round their heads, and their *panungs* were of the same colour (this to make it easier to distinguish the combatants). Their hands and wrists were bound with thick folds of dirty linen rags, as were also their loins. A

thin cotton jacket covered the upper part of the body.

The boxing was preceded by a series of fantastic leaps and capers, balancing feats, etc., all with the object of screwing up the boxer's courage and inspiring his adversary with fear — and then the fighting started, two by two. Every trick seemed to be allowed, and they hit and kicked by turns with an energy that was worthy of a better cause. It was chiefly the antagonist's face that was aimed at, and especially his nose. To have his olfactory organ broken is regarded as the severest defeat a champion can suffer, and one of the combatants still showed evident traces of such a blow; for where his nose ought to have been was only a formless lump of flesh, pointing crookedly up to the sky. There was one young man in particular — the victor of the day — who distinguished himself by his almost cat-like agility and quickness. His favourite trick was to give a box on the ear — with his feet, and every time he got in one of these, the spectators applauded as if they were never going to stop. But the old man — a former champion boxer — did not come off badly either, and finished a good third.

The competitors did not possess any noteworthy degree of endurance. Each bout lasted only a few minutes, after which came a long rest before the fight could be continued. The pauses were used for attending to the boxer's wounds or

giving him a douche. In the first of these processes the "doctor" simply spat in his hand and then rubbed the injured spot until the bleeding stopped; if necessary, the saliva was mixed with a little earth. The "douche" was if possible even more primitive: the second filled his mouth with a good swill of water and then sent it out in the form of fine rain over the victim's face.

The judging is very simple. When a man thinks he has had enough punishment, he leaves the field without more ado to his opponent, who then tackles the next man. Thus one after another is weeded out until the victor is left alone on the field of battle and receives from the hands of the guest of honour a sum of money, large or small according to the nature and size of the competition. No resentment is felt after a severe pummelling of this kind, and the day usually ends in all good-fellowship with the victor offering each of his defeated opponents a meal of rice and a chew of betel.

The next day—the last of the year—we arrived safely at Bangkok, tired, but with nothing but pleasant memories of an interesting shooting expedition. And the buffalo horns from Ban Cheewan are at present the proudest specimen among my hunting trophies, since, as far as I know, Lewenhaupt and I are the only Europeans who have ever shot any of this species of the Siamese

fauna. And in future it will be still harder—not to say impossible—to bring down these animals, as on account of the small number of them in the country it is proposed to protect them altogether—undoubtedly a wise measure, especially as the herd at Ban Krashorn appears to be the only one left in the whole of Eastern Siam.

And now not much more remains to be told of our long stay in the Land of the White Elephant. Our departure, which had already been postponed on account of an outbreak of smallpox on the *Mahachakreri*, was finally fixed for January 6, and the few days that remained were chiefly devoted to farewell visits.

Three of the evenings were occupied by historical pageants, arranged on the Wild Tigers' playground, and carried out by all the members of the Club. With their excellent scenic arrangements they gave a good idea of the history of Siam from the earliest times to the present day. The costumes were historically correct, and no pains had been spared to make the performances as realistic as possible. Nor were battle elephants wanting, richly hung with costly trappings and jewelled ornaments. As usual when the Wild Tiger Corps was concerned, the King himself was the leading spirit of the undertaking: he would suddenly appear among the players where he was least expected, and in addition performed the

difficult duties of stage manager with praiseworthy success. The last representation ended at 1.30 a.m. with a trooping of the colour and the singing of the following patriotic song, written by the present King when Crown Prince :—

LOVE OF OUR RACE AND OUR FATHERS' LAND

Free-born men,
Let us not forget our race and our faith ;
Let us not have been born in vain
Of a free nation.
How could a man who respects himself
Remain idle ?
Each one ought to work,
That all may be ready !

In a country without love and union
The best work cannot bear fruit ;
And if a nation is breaking up and near its ruin,
How can the private individual hope for prosperity ?
If foreigners should rule over us,
We should be slain and ill-treated ;
They would oppress us from morning till night,
As is the way of conquerors.
Do not imagine that they would respect our position and name,
Or that they would consider our birth ;
We ourselves should suffer
And be put to shame before the rest of the world.

Therefore, comrades, may we be loyal to the King
And true to our country and our faith :
May we offer our lives without regret
That the freedom of "the Free" be not lost !
Let us stand united,
And certain victory is ours !
Let us be brave and firmly determined
To protect our liberty till heaven and earth pass away !

Then our last day in Bangkok arrived. In the courtyard of the Saranrom Palace all our Siamese

pages¹ and servants were drawn up for a final farewell, and for the last time the guard at the gate saluted with drums and trumpets as we left the walls of the hospitable palace behind us and drove off to pay our farewell visit to the King. It was with real regret that I pressed his hand for the last time, for during our long, almost daily companionship I had learnt to value not only the monarch and autocrat, but also the man and the friend. And the truly magnificent Oriental hospitality that was shown us by our royal host during the whole of this long stay in Siam, I shall indeed be slow to forget. He was most anxious to give my wife a little girl—daughter of one of the chamberlains—as a parting present; but we excused ourselves, pointing out the unsuitable character of the Northern climate for such a child of the sun.

With a final shake of the hand we separated, and not long after I sat once more on the deck of the *Mahachakreri*, steaming eastward in search of new adventures.

¹ These pages are educated at a special school, and are often of very high birth. Thus, for instance, our chauffeur was a Prince, and the groom on the box an Excellency! Until they have completed their education, however, they have no right to bear these titles.

CHAPTER IX

SAIGON AND PNOM PENH

THIS time the Gulf of Siam showed itself more gracious, and without further agitation we ran, on the morning of the third day, into the Mekong, or "Father of the Waters," as the natives call the broad river which flows like a life-giving artery through French Indo-China. And a few hours later, under a genuine tropical downpour, we disembarked from the *Mahachakreri* and trod the pavements of Saigon.

After the sun-drenched atmosphere and motley life of Bangkok I cannot say that the capital of Cochin-China appeared to advantage that wet afternoon. Nor did the group of demonstrative Frenchmen—wet to the skin in spite of their umbrellas—who met us on the quay, contribute to raise our spirits to any appreciable extent. And when we drove with the dripping Secretary to the Governor in a closed motor-car through almost empty streets up to the desolate but pompous residence of the Governor-General (its occupant was absent in Tonkin for the time being, but had nevertheless with genuine French politeness placed

his house at our disposal), it was not without a sigh of regret that my thoughts flew back to the cheerful and comfortable Saranrom Palace. But rain can spoil even the best of places, and when therefore on the following morning the sun again beamed from a deep blue tropical sky, our surroundings acquired a considerably more cheerful character.

"The Paris of the East," as the French are fond of calling Saigon, produces chiefly the impression of a fairly large provincial town with broad streets and boulevards, cafés, theatres, and music-halls. Massive three-storeyed houses border its principal streets, where in the evening the shop-windows are as brilliant with electric light as those of the Rue de la Paix. The majority of the pedestrians are Europeans; only here and there appears a white-clad Annamese with his black hair gathered into a knot over his neck, while the untiring Chinese drag their ever-jingling rickshaws—here called *pousse-pousse*—through the anything but lively traffic. But if one happens to turn off into a side-street, it will be found that everything Occidental suddenly comes to an end and gives way to an ordinary, crowded, and dirty Oriental town, with winding alleys and ramshackle hovels. Moreover, the whole population of Saigon itself only amounts to fifty-seven thousand persons, of whom over seven thousand are whites.

None the less has the French Government accomplished a great achievement here, when it is

considered that on the annexation of the place in 1859 it only consisted of a large citadel, round the foot of which a handful of Annamese bamboo huts modestly sought protection both from invaders and from the wild beasts of the forest. From having been originally a veritable nursery for all kinds of fevers, the district was gradually drained, levelled, and planted, so that at present Saigon offers very tolerable conditions from a sanitary point of view. The climate cannot be called particularly healthy, with its severe heat and penetrating moisture, but to the tourist or the casual visitor it presents no danger. Those, on the other hand, who, for some reason, are obliged to live out here for some years in succession, fall victims sooner or later to fever and dysentery. Pale and wasted, they go about like shadows of their former selves, only longing for the time when they will be free to return to cooler regions.

Only a few miles from Saigon lies the great Chinese town of Cholon, inhabited by no fewer than two hundred thousand of the yellow race and called by the French simply "the suburb." This is the centre of all the trade and industry of Cochin-China, and the export of rice is specially important. Some feeble idea may be formed of the magnitude of this export from the fact that, whether the crop is good or bad, over a million tons of rice are annually shipped out of the country—that is, about double the weight of the total quantity of pig-iron

produced in Sweden during the year 1911. Latterly, however, the main interest has attached to rubber planting, which, thanks to favourable climatic conditions, has made enormous strides. This industry is still so young that the results are not very noticeable as yet; but when once all the hundreds of thousands of trees that have been planted during the last few years on the fertile plains of Cochin-China begin to be tapped—then let the “bears” in rubber look out for themselves, for the price in the world’s markets will drop to an unprecedented figure.

A visit to Cholon ought not to be missed. In contrast to Saigon, it shows a most animated street-life. A stream of people walking and driving swarms day and night through its winding alleys, and loud-voiced vendors cry their more or less appetising eatables and drinkables. Chinese weapons and silks gleam in the open booths, and on the walls hang sumptuous hand-embroideries from Tonkin. With luck one may still pick up some piece of old pottery; but here, as everywhere in the East, most of it has already been snapped up and sent to Europe.

Saigon and Cholon are connected by several picturesque roads. One of them in particular, called the “Polygon,” is very interesting, as it leads across “la plaine des tombeaux”—an extensive tract of some miles in length, entirely covered with ruinous, though decorative old Anna-

mese monuments. Wherever one turns one's eyes, they rest upon pagodas and venerable sepulchres, often richly ornamented with sculptures of masterly execution. The whole landscape gives the impression of an immense deserted cemetery, in which the graves have been scattered at hazard and now lie without the slightest attention or care.

Otherwise Saigon offers nothing of interest. On the other hand, its surroundings are remarkably beautiful and easy of access, as in recent years a number of excellent motor-roads have been laid out. Many and picturesque were the excursions we made in this way, now past miles of rubber plantations, now through dense jungle, now over light bridges of bamboo, beneath which canals, half choked with vegetation, wound among the most luxuriant tropical flora. Screaming monkeys swung from branch to branch, and all kinds of bright-plumaged birds rose on rapid wings before the on-rushing car.

There is a story that one day a large python lay across the road, covering its whole width. The chauffeur was not able to stop, and the whole car went over the living obstacle. The latter, however, did not allow itself to be in the least put out, but just gave a little shake of its long body and then wriggled away as if nothing had happened. Such little episodes are of course the exception, but until a few years ago wild animals were a real terror in certain parts of the country.

Above all, of course, the tiger, whose human repasts have been innumerable, especially among the natives; but the elephants have also given a good deal of trouble, particularly on the railways. Not long ago one of these monsters was responsible for a train being actually derailed and partly overturned. It is true that the elephant was killed by the shock, but since then the trains have only run in the daytime.

Our original intention in visiting Indo-China was to go up to the magnificent ruins at Angkor in Cambodia. On account of our departure from Bangkok being delayed for about a fortnight, we were told that the visit to Angkor would have to be given up, as the rivers had sunk to an unusually low level that year and the route by water was the only one available. I therefore decided to devote the greater part of the short stay in French Asia to shooting, and made certain preparations and inquiries to this end. Judge, then, of our surprise when, shortly after our arrival at Saigon, the amiable French Resident in Cambodia waited on us with the agreeable news that, thanks to the united efforts of himself and the Steamboat Company, the trip to the ancient ruined city had nevertheless been made possible, and that it would be made in half the usual time. Simultaneously, however, came an invitation from the Duke of Montpensier, who happened to be staying in the town, to shoot buffaloes on the great plains on

the borders of Annam. Everything was already arranged, and he was only waiting for me to fix the day.

Here was a dilemma. Only twelve days were at our disposal, and to combine these two tempting programmes was found to be impossible. For the ladies and non-sportsmen of the party the question was a very simple one; of course they chose Angkor. But for the undersigned and Lewenhaupt, who had already tasted blood in Siam and were now more than ever eager for the fray, the nut was a harder one to crack. Should we improve our minds with ancient Khmer architecture, or throw "culture" to the winds and enjoy the glorious life of the wilds under the special protection of the goddess Diana? I must confess that we were not long in doubt. My sporting blood has never yet been tamed. But as the route to Angkor passes through Pnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, and as I was anxious to visit the nominal King of the country, we decided to keep together so far; after which the party was to divide, and those bound for Angkor would continue their journey, while Lewenhaupt and I returned to Saigon, from whence we should start on our shooting expedition.

Thus it came about that a few days later we found ourselves in an unusually dusty train, rattling and shaking through endless rice-fields on our way to the little town of Mytho, situated

in the fertile delta of the Mekong and on one of the many mouths of the great river. Here the river trip was to begin, and between lines of Annamese gendarmes, dressed in blue coats with big round straw hats and "presenting arms" with their revolvers, we went on board the paddle-steamer *Battambang*, which was to take us up to Pnom Penh.

Our floating hotel did not offer any very great degree of comfort. The cabins were small and poor, and the berths had been taken a long while in advance by small hopping bedfellows. But what can one expect on the Mekong in the heart of Cochin-China? Thanks to the generous courtesy of the Messageries Fluviales, we had the whole boat to ourselves, and it was no use looking a gift-horse too narrowly in the mouth.

Besides, the trip itself was glorious. The landscape showed the greatest wealth of variety. Now open fields, where the rice crops extended as far as the eye could see; now impenetrable jungle vegetation with the delicate foliage of bamboo thickets hanging right down into the water; now a few low huts with high, pointed roofs, surrounded by banana groves, where the yellow fruit hung in thick clusters as though from gigantic vines. Now and then a big *sampan* came sailing downstream, laden to the water's edge with rice and fruit, and with its brown-tanned sail swelling in the stiff breeze, or we passed a flotilla of fishing-boats,

with naked, bronze-coloured boys dragging their nets in the muddy fairway, full of water plants. The level of the water was already very low, and everywhere the treacherous outlines of long sand-banks were to be seen. In a week the *Battambang* would have to be laid up and replaced by a smaller boat, drawing only three feet of water; for the river is no deeper than that in summer.

We travelled in this way the whole day and half the night. How the pilot could find his way or even see anything in the intense darkness passes my comprehension. For although my own eyes are pretty well trained in staring into the dark from the bridge of a torpedo-boat, I saw absolutely nothing here except two parallel lines, one on each side, where the outline of the forest showed up against the somewhat lighter night-sky. Not a light of any kind was to be seen; the whole landscape was, as it were, wrapped in a black sack. And yet our dark-skinned, cigarette-smoking pilot could unerringly point out our position on the chart; whether he was lying or not, I had of course no means of knowing; but it is a fact that we got there, and that in such good time that in the early hours of the morning we were obliged to lie still, so as not to reach Pnom Penh before the hour fixed.

At noon next day we sighted "Norodom's lighthouse"—a folly of the late King's, which grotesquely rears itself from a point in the river—and

a little later the steamer was moored to the landing-stage, composed of enormous pontoons. The panorama of the town is at the same time beautiful and quaint, with its numerous gilt pagodas and temple-roofs, among which the green knoll of the "Pnom," crowned by a gleaming white sugar-loaf, dominates the rest of the city. Situated at the point where no fewer than four branches of the river meet in the form of an X, Pnom Penh with its sixty thousand inhabitants is not only the capital of Cambodia, but also the centre of its trade and industry. Great quantities of rice, cotton and fruit are exported yearly, and in the autumn large shipments of cattle take place, especially to the Philippines. There are no less than five different quarters of the town, each with its sharply defined character. The Cambodian quarter lies farthest to the south, built of timber, mostly on piles, and it includes the palace. The Chinese-Annamese quarter forms the business centre, with straight streets and modern houses. The French quarter, along the river, consists of neat little villas, embedded in verdant gardens. The Catholic Annamese quarter (a zealous missionary work has been recently carried on with great success among the natives) lies farthest north; and finally, the Malay is situated on the other bank, between the main stream of the Mekong and its tributary the Tonlé Sap.

Where all these houses now stand, nothing was

to be seen about twenty years ago but a few low bamboo huts, erected on piles, so as to be habitable during the rains, when the whole district is more or less under water. The level of the whole town has been raised, and great pits are to be found everywhere on the outskirts, from which the soil has been taken for this purpose. The town presents on the whole a neat and attractive appearance, in many ways strongly recalling Bangkok. The French call it "*la plus coquette des villes d'Indochine*." Its name comes from the conical mound in the middle of the town, of which the story goes that nine hundred years ago "a verdant cone suddenly arose out of the great waters, upon the top of which an inconsolable widow of the name of Penh caused a pagoda to be built for the expiation of her husband's innumerable sins." The cone or Pnom still stands there with its white sugar-loaf on the top, and round its foot spreads a newly laid out garden, full of the succulent verdure of the tropics, in which small temples with fine old Cambodian sculptures lie embedded. One side of this curious mound has, however, been greatly profaned, as the present King, Sisowath, has had a great bronze statue of himself erected there—an extraordinary piece of bad taste which destroys a good deal of the old-world spirit of this otherwise beautiful spot.

It was this exotic King in name who was the chief object of my visit to the capital of Cambodia,

and, as I had heard a good many amusing anecdotes about him, it was not without a certain excitement that I proceeded that afternoon to the palace, accompanied by the "Résident Supérieur." This palace is in its main lines copied from the corresponding edifice in Bangkok, though it is much smaller in plan and considerably inferior in detail. A sad state of decay prevails everywhere, and the whole place rather gives one the impression of the scenery of an operetta. Past a drumming palace guard of fifteen men—all that is left of the Cambodian army—we drove up to a little pavilion in bungled Empire style, that was presented by the Emperor Napoleon III. after the great Exhibition in Paris. At the door the whole Court was assembled—eight in number—and among these gentlemen in *panungs* one could almost imagine oneself transported to Siam, so like are the Cambodians both in appearance and dress to their cousins across the border, whom they also endeavour to imitate in everything.

In a room on the first floor Sisowath received us. He was a little, bent old man already well on in the seventies, but with a benevolent, not to say sympathetic expression in his wrinkled face, from which two large round eyes gave me a kindly look of welcome. His whole form seemed to beam with benevolence, and I can well understand the nickname the French have given him—"le bon Roi." In his relations with the latter he occupies a very

subordinate position, and lives entirely on their charity, which takes the form of a yearly allowance from the French Government.

It is assuredly no enviable lot for the ruler of a once powerful kingdom thus to have his toes trodden on by Western invaders. For the country has a proud history. Cambodia was already in existence in the fifth century A.D., and from then until the eleventh century it attained a high degree of power and culture, to which many splendid monuments and detailed Sanskrit inscriptions still bear witness. No country was stronger at that period or exercised greater influence in the whole of Farther India than the extensive Khmer kingdom. But with the thirteenth century a period of intellectual and physical depression set in, of which the two ambitious neighbouring countries, Siam and Annam, knew how to take advantage, and for several centuries these two mutually contested for the dominion of Cambodia. The struggle only ended in 1847, when the latter had to pay tribute to both its rivals. Then, when France had finally established herself in Cochin-China and subdued the Annamese, Siam also recognised her protectorate in Cambodia, in return for the provinces of Angkor and Battambang, which then passed into Siamese hands, only to revert soon afterwards to the French. The country acquired its present boundaries in 1884 and 1893.

The audience of Sisowath was quite short.

After having duly inquired through an interpreter about each other's health and welfare, and ascertained that neither of us had ever been so well as at that moment, the whole party of Swedes were decorated with the showy ribbons of the Cambodian Order, borrowed from various officials in the town, the Treasury being out of decorations for the moment, after which we withdrew to make a more detailed inspection of the palace.

Its sights are few but quaint. In a large courtyard, paved with stones and surrounded by lofty walls still decorated with ancient frescoes representing scenes from the history of Cambodia, stands the so-called Silver Pagoda, a temple erected by Sisowath's predecessor, Norodom, in the curious, but not very attractive architectural style of the country. The name is derived from the large plates of silver with which the floor is covered. Here too, as in Bangkok, is an "Emerald Buddha" of extraordinary brilliance and transparency. Evil tongues relate, however, that the original precious material has been replaced by green bottle-glass in order to extricate the present King from a temporary pecuniary embarrassment. In any case, the Buddha was certainly *not* made of emerald. Genuine enough, on the other hand, was a similar figure of natural size, made of the purest gold and studded with glittering gems. This image stands by itself in the middle of the floor, and is estimated to represent a value of over £100,000.

On one side of the temple stands a large rock with a "footprint" of Buddha, and on the other an insignificant little wooden pavilion, in which the sword of state, "Prea Khan," is kept. This is regarded as the nation's most precious possession, and was always carried into battle in front of the army. It is believed that the god Indra himself fashioned the weapon, and that he descended from heaven in person to deliver it to one of the ancient Khmer kings. The sword lies upon its own little throne, and is guarded day and night by specially trusty warders. It may never be drawn from its sheath except to slay, and it was only after much hesitation that we were allowed to see half the blade. It is a masterpiece of the smith's art, richly inlaid with gold and decorated in relief, and appears to be of Cambodian, or possibly Chinese workmanship.

In the open space before the Silver Pagoda stands a huge equestrian statue of King Norodom. The material is bronze, but in order to make the effigy of this popular King more lifelike, it has been painted in natural colours, which of course gives it an appearance in the highest degree bizarre. Moreover, to protect the paint, a lofty roof of corrugated iron has been erected over the work of art.

After a long and warm dinner at the hospitable French Resident's, when of course the inevitable speeches about the good relations between Sweden,



A BONZE OF THE SILVER PAGODA.

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Cambodia, and France formed part of the programme, we betook ourselves for the second time that day to the palace, to witness the gala performance of the ballet. Next to the ruins of Angkor, the said *corps de ballet* is perhaps the chief sight of Cambodia. When Sisowath visited the French President a few years ago in the great metropolis on the Seine, he took with him a large number of his dancing-girls, who appeared on several occasions in their strange rôles, and for a short time claimed the interest and applause of the Parisians. To this visit must be attributed their European fame, as also the anecdote of Sisowath's first experience of a cinematograph, when, on seeing a picture of his arrival in Paris, he got up and bowed with exquisite politeness to his own moving image on the white cloth.

In Cambodia, polygamy is permitted to the extent that every man may have three wives. In this matter, however, the King forms a brilliant exception, as not long ago he had no fewer than six hundred and twenty wives. But in the interests of morality this number was reduced by the French Resident to four hundred and fifty, and it is these and no others who form the establishment of the famous ballet. There is another story that, when Sisowath was no longer allowed to keep his army, he set up this institution instead, as an appropriate compensation. That the history of the ballet is considerably older than this is certain, but the

anecdote is nevertheless characteristic of the views of a number of Oriental rulers.

The Theatre Royal of Pnom Penh is a tolerably simple concern, and consists of nothing more than a big roof, supported by a number of wooden pillars. There are no walls on three of the sides, but the fourth has heavy curtains, through which the performers make their entrances and exits. Only a very limited number of seats are at the disposal of visitors, and that section of the populace which always musters on such occasions as the present (for admission is free to everybody) has to content itself with squatting on the ground in the usual subservient position. The King sits on a raised place on one side, and round him stand the Princes and courtiers. Here are also the places for invited guests, and we therefore took our seats on some gorgeous chairs in his neighbourhood. Our royal host was in excellent humour, chatted all the time, first with one, then with another, and explained the different dances, which seemed to give him indescribable enjoyment. Between whiles he puffed at big lotus-cigars, and now and then spat discreetly into a golden bowl, which one of the chamberlains respectfully held under his nose.

In the middle of the theatre a square stage was erected, feebly illuminated by half a dozen smoky oil-lamps; here the dancing took place.

As regards the character of the performance, I shall content myself with referring the reader to



THE PRIMA-BALLERINA OF SISOWATH'S BALLET.

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the corresponding spectacle in Siam, for there is really no very great difference between the choreographic art of the two countries—the same extraordinary leaps, the same grotesque bendings of arms and legs, the same monotonous music. The dresses were even richer if possible, all made of thick gold brocade. But as regards the appearance of the performers it was very hard to form an opinion. For either a hideous mask was drawn over the whole head, or the face was covered with a thick coat of white paint, which gave the wearer a ghostly appearance. In spite of this, one could guess that here and there the white make-up must conceal regular and, even according to Western ideas, handsome features. This was especially the case with a neat little girl of sixteen, who was generally pointed out as the present chief favourite of the septuagenarian King.

The first part of the programme—a prehistoric mythological ballet—was almost identical with the corresponding performance in Bangkok. The second part, on the other hand, contained a number of characteristic dances, such as flower, staff, fan dances, and so on, in which there was some very expert juggling with the different objects. One number, which specially took the fancy of the natives, was entitled “An angel, riding on a *nagá*, pursues a *garuda* through the air.” The leading persons were hung from the roof by wires, which could be moved in elliptical orbits round the stage.

Sprawling and gesticulating, they chased each other round the arena, looking exactly like children's toys dangling on the end of a string.

Later in the evening Lewenhaupt and I separated from the rest of our party and returned to Saigon by the same way we had come—that is, not altogether the same way, as during the night we stuck fast on a sandbank in the middle of the river, and were only able to get off after several hours' hard work.

The remainder of the party, which besides the two ladies was made up of Chamberlain Rudebeck, Chamberlain Bildt, and some Frenchmen and Cambodians, went on up the Tonlé Sap to Angkor. Chamberlain Bildt has kindly undertaken to tell the story of that interesting expedition in the next chapter, and I therefore leave the reader in his hands, while I spend a few days in the jungle, shooting buffaloes on the wide plains of Cochin-China.

CHAPTER X

A VISIT TO ANGKOR

IT was the accomplished and erudite French Minister in Stockholm, M. Eugène Thiébaud, who was really the cause of our visit to Angkor. In communicating the French Government's invitation to the ducal couple to visit the French possessions in Indo-China, he added, "Above all, do not fail to see Angkor. I have unfortunately not been there myself, but friends of mine who have seen it sum up their impressions in the words: Greater than Rome and more beautiful than Greece." Such words as these stirred the imagination, and maps and steamboat guides were diligently searched during the outward voyage with a view to finding out more about this wonderful place, and above all, how to get there. For it must be remembered that no guide-book to Farther India is in existence, and it is extraordinary how one misses a Baedeker in those countries where this excellent and reliable companion is absent. But Indo-China does not lie in the beaten path, and is as yet little visited by tourists. Nor had any of our numerous fellow-passengers on the *Kleist* ever been to Angkor; at

the most they had heard of it as a legend of a great ruined city, buried far away in the depths of the jungle. But this legend was just what attracted us.

Is there anything more interesting to an imaginative person who is fond of travel than maps? Above all the map of Asia, where everything is on a larger scale than what we are accustomed to, and at the same time so entirely different, and where the imagination has free play? With the map before me, I measured the route from Bangkok, our projected starting-point, to Angkor, where we were all anxious to go. The distance did not appear insurmountable, reckoned on an Asiatic scale, and from Bangkok a railway runs to Korat, a good piece of the way. Could we not get elephants and an escort, and, like the travellers of old, go overland to the holy ruins of Angkor, watch the wonderful life of the jungle by day, and seek shelter with yellow-robed priests in the temples at night, enjoy the sight of the starry tropical sky, and avoid the track of tourists? The plan was a tempting one. H.M. the King of Siam promised to give it his support as far as his kingdom extended, and letters were sent to the new Governor-General of French Indo-China, M. Albert Sarraut, inquiring whether elephants and escort could meet the party at the Siamese frontier and conduct the Swedish ducal couple and suite to Angkor. But the more the project was examined, the more difficult its realisa-

tion proved to be. Of course, during the Middle Ages the peoples of Siam and Cambodia were constantly harassing each other, and must then have traversed the jungles; but their war-paths are unknown, and have certainly been overgrown long ago, nor is there now any communication except the circuitous route by boat *via* Saigon. There are now neither practicable roads, trustworthy guides, nor even the certainty of finding water and camping-grounds. Still less prospect was there of finding hospitable temples, from whose verandahs we might admire the Southern Cross at night, and within whose walls the pious monks would offer us food and lodging.

When the answer of the Governor-General arrived, it was indeed extremely obliging, but it so entirely confirmed the warnings of our Siamese friends that all thoughts of a pilgrimage on the backs of elephants had to be given up.

The worst thing of all was, that even if we took the usual tourist route, by steamer to Saigon and thence up the river Mekong, it was very uncertain whether we should reach Angkor before navigation was closed for the year. For the only way to get there is by river, up the north-western arm of the Mekong, across Lake Tonlé Sap, and finally up the little river Siem Reap. But now the water had already begun to sink in a disquieting way and at an unusually early date.

The river Mekong, remarkable in many respects,

has the peculiarity of possessing two outlets, which divide at the present capital of Cambodia, Pnom Penh. The larger and more southerly of these empties itself into the China Sea through a many-armed delta; while the other, which is only full in the autumn months when the water is high, flows to the north-west up country, where a somewhat lower-lying basin is filled by its waters for some months of the year, forming Lake Tonlé Sap. When, about the New Year, the water level in the upper Mekong falls and the supply is thus stopped, the waters of Tonlé Sap begin to flow back to the south-east, the previously flooded fields near the river banks can be sown for the usual rice crop, and both lake and river become too shallow to be navigable by any other craft than the flat-bottomed native *sampans*.

There was thus nothing to be done but to accommodate ourselves to circumstances, to make the journey by steamboat from Bangkok to Saigon, and on to Pnom Penh, from whence, if it could be done, we were to proceed by river to Angkor.

On the night of January 10, 1912, warm and clear as an August night at home, H.R.H. Prince William left Pnom Penh for the south on a shooting expedition, accompanied by Count Lewenhaupt, while H.R.H. Princess Marie and the rest of the party waited to embark next morning for Angkor. The season was properly speaking over, the water was falling alarmingly every day, and there was an

increasing risk that the steamboats might no longer find water enough under their keels. But although the Steamboat Company was doubtful about the practicability of the expedition, the energetic, vivacious, and chivalrous Resident General of Cambodia, M. Ernest Outrey, had made up his mind that the first European Royal Princess to visit Cambodia should also realise her desire of seeing its most historic ruins. And the Frenchmen of the present day have by no means forgotten the great Napoleon's utterance, that the word "impossible" is not to be found in the French language.

At ten o'clock on the following morning Princess Marie went on board, accompanied, besides her Swedish suite and servants, by M. Outrey, his chief Secretary, the young and intelligent M. Silvestre with his handsome wife, and the chairman of the Steamboat Company, the lively, quick-witted, and ever amiable M. Albert Littaye. We were no longer on the comfortable *Battambang*, which had brought us to Pnom Penh, but on one of the Messageries Fluviales' smaller boats, on which comfort was restricted chiefly by lack of space. In order to pay a special compliment to the Swedish Princess, the amiable old King Sisowath had sent his son, Prince Monivong, to accompany the party to Angkor ; but this sympathetic young Prince, who had been in France and spoke the French language, was unfortunately indisposed

almost from the beginning, and could take but little part in the cheerful social life on board.

We steamed away from Pnom Penh, leaving behind us two great works in purely European engineering style, which the late King Norodom had erected to show his interest in Western ideas: a big lighthouse, which is unfortunately quite meaningless from the point of view of navigation, and a monumental bridge, which swallowed up millions, but does not serve any traffic worth mentioning. We now had the stream against us; the water was running slowly to the south-east between the steep banks that here border the broad and majestic river. But from the boat's winding course along the fairway we could see that the yellow stream was fairly shallow. We met no steamboats and not many *sampans*, but great tufts of a beautiful lake-grass with blue flowers continually floated past us, a plant that we recognised from Siam, where its rapid growth threatens to choke many ponds and small lakes. The servants on board were Chinese, the best servants in the world, and the food was of the high standard which, thank Heaven, always follows the tricolour. I have never yet seen a French boat on which the cuisine was neglected, whatever else may have been. And with light and cheerful French conversation the time passed so quickly that we had not grown weary of the monotony of the

landscape before hills began to appear on the horizon and we arrived at Kompong-Chnang, the Venice of Cambodia, from whence we were to make a little excursion.

They were veritable gondolas, though roofed with straw, that took us off, and we were punted slowly forward through a system of narrow canals, now between fertile fields and now past leafy groves, a landscape almost Swedish in appearance, for these were trees with foliage resembling ours, and not palms. Our object was a hill, on the top of which a pagoda reared its gilt spire to the deep blue sky. We recognised the many steep roofs, the gaudy colours, the rich, far too rich, ornamentation, and found that in Cambodia this type of building corresponds to the parish church of our villages. The Swedish peasant expects his church to be an architectural expression of seriousness, the Cambodian one of joy and splendour. The temple was surrounded, as usual, by a large enclosure with a garden, a few dwelling-houses, and a school. The latter consisted of an open hall on the brow of the hill, from which the children had a splendid view of the village below, the river with its many canals, and in the background the distant blue outlines of lofty hills. The boys were having a French lesson, and their master, a Cambodian native with a good French accent,

was just trying to accustom them to the European way of reading aloud. The art of reading in Cambodia has so long been a priestly employment that it has become the custom to read everything in a sing-song tone, like a Catholic priest saying mass. The effect of this solemn intonation on the matter-of-fact contents of the French lesson-book may easily be imagined. The boys, who were of the age of twelve to fourteen and two or three of whom wore the yellow dress of the priests, looked contented, healthy, and amicable. Here in Cambodia there is a more light-hearted look in the popular type than in Saigon, where the Annamese, through their more direct Chinese extraction, bear a stronger stamp of impenetrability. The unchangeable expression is a Mongolian peculiarity, but here one has rather the impression of Aryan descent, with frankness and freely demonstrated feelings.

The air had become cooler, and as we were punted back to the river, we drew the awnings and had a better view of the banks, which were bordered everywhere by floating villages, boat after boat of the same broad type, built of unpainted wood with vaulted thatched roofs and high stems. Some of the houses were built half in the water on lofty piles, half on land, all with thatched walls which could be pushed out on poles, giving the houses the look of marquees.

We went on board our steamboat again and enjoyed the cool of the evening, sitting with our French friends and listening to their singing of long extracts from *Manon*, *Werther*, and *Hérodiade*. And then came the night, which most of us passed on mattresses spread on deck, undisturbed by the pattering of the bare-footed crew, but not by the numerous insect world that is inseparable from a night in the tropics.

Next morning, when we awoke, the landscape had changed. Evidently we were on Lake Tonlé Sap, for on one side nothing was to be seen but water and fishing-boats, but to starboard a long row of trees appeared above the water; we were abreast of the annually flooded forest through which the Siem Reap runs into Tonlé Sap. At the edge of the forest lay a whole row of *sampans*, all with a thatched roof amidships and a tricolour in the bows, and these glided slowly forward to receive us and our baggage. Each *sampan* had room for two Europeans, and was provided with comfortable basket-chairs; fore and aft stood two rowers, who pulled the boat on at a good pace and with an agreeable gliding movement. We turned into a channel where the tree-tops indicated the course of the river, and where the many turns often gave us a view of our own flotilla, gliding forward as though in procession. Gradually the forest came to an end, the lake disappeared, and we saw that we were in a river with well-defined

banks, where, however, everything indicated that the water level had recently been much higher, and where the many fishing-nets gave evidence of the occupation of the inhabitants.

We left the steamboat at about seven o'clock, and for two hours glided past thick bush and fishing villages with huts of straw. The rowers worked in silence, there was no animal life on the banks, and the few people in the villages looked dejected and appeared to live in great poverty. The river became narrower and narrower and divided into several arms; we soon turned into a sort of network of canals among reedy swamps, and then a rower jumped ashore from the foremost boat and drew it to the bank, where a number of small ox-carts were drawn up. The river trip was ended, and we took our places in the carts, which had two high wheels, a seat for two persons, and a bit of board at their feet, on which a native driver sat to guide his two oxen. If the carts were of the most primitive kind, the oxen were all the more showy; they were splendid dun-coloured animals with big horns and wise velvet eyes. They looked well fed and were treated with great kindness, as is almost everywhere the case where the mild doctrine of Buddha has proclaimed the participation of animals in the all-embracing life of the Divinity. There was no question of a made road here; we were shaken along ox-paths for an hour and

a half over a spongy plain, which a week before would only have been accessible to a *sampan*. In a few weeks more this ground would be ploughed and sown with rice by an immigrant population, which after the harvest returns to its homes in the higher forest districts; but as yet no human activity was to be observed. Once or twice our oxen forded the winding river Siem Reap and the water came disquietingly near the bottom of the cart, but at a bend of the river a well-trodden landing-place and a large village came in sight : we had arrived at Siem Reap.

In 1907, with the powerful help of France, the provinces of Battambang and Siem Reap, with the ruins of the ancient capital, Angkor, were restored to Cambodia, which some time previously had been compelled to cede them to her former vassal State, Siam. A French official now resides here, and we had reached civilisation again. We were once more on dry land that is not flooded annually, an excellent road stretched in front of us, leading through a forest of fine and lofty trees, and on this road a trim motor-omnibus was waiting. Never let it be said that an automobile does not suit every landscape, or that the wilderness loses its charm by being made easily accessible. After the jolting of the ox-carts, when we had to hold on to the side for fear of tumbling out, it was simply heavenly to rush through the landscape without having to think of how one was being borne along, and to be able

to enjoy the shade and coolness of the forest, the red and purple tints of the innumerable flowers, the many picturesque villages, the naked children at play, the powerful forms of the men and the bright dresses of the women, the narrow, high-pitched bamboo bridges over the river, the clanking mills, and the leaping monkeys in the tree-tops. Here under the vault of foliage the heat was not so oppressively felt, though it was lunch-time before the car stopped before the bungalow recently erected at Angkor by the French Government for the use of tourists.

The bungalow is a low, but neat and well-kept one-storeyed building of stone, surrounded by a fence of bamboo. Over its gate waved the Swedish flag beside the French, the former assuredly for the first time in Cambodia. Everything had here been arranged in the best possible way, but the greatest excitement was to rush out on to the verandah for a first glimpse of the great temple, Angkor Wat. About five hundred yards from the bungalow, behind a gigantic moat and framed in palms and other lofty trees, it rises like a fairy castle with its huge, solemn, pale-grey mass and its five pyramidal and richly sculptured towers, the outlines of which are sharply defined against the warm air. Like St. Peter's at Rome, it does not at first impress one with its extraordinary size. It is only on approaching it and wandering through its endless galleries that one realises that its outer walls form one square

kilometre, and that the four walls of the ground floor of the actual temple measure 250 yards each. At a distance Angkor Wat is a vision of incomparable beauty, calm and majestic, grand but not oppressive in its effect.

At the bungalow we found, besides its French superintendent, a young French archæologist, M. de Mecquenem, a member of the Government institution of ethnology¹ and archæology, l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient. This institution has a special section for the Angkor group, comprising not only the ruins of Angkor itself, but the numerous remains that have been found by natives and by European travellers, mostly French officials, in the dense and trackless jungles relatively near to Angkor.

During the heat of the day, from 12 to 4, no white man could move out of doors. We therefore reposed in comfortable basket-chairs, reading the few handbooks that have been written about Angkor or listening to M. de Mecquenem.

Angkor, say our authorities, has only been known very recently. Its existence had been confirmed by solitary European travellers, who had made their way thither under native guidance through the jungle, but the journey was generally made by caravan from the Siamese side, since in those days Angkor still belonged to Siam. It was only when it came into the possession of Cambodia, that is, of France, and the French Messageries

Fluviales had organised the river route, that regular archæological studies could be carried on. These have recently been commenced, and although an immense amount of work remains to be done, some of the mysteries of the place have been cleared up. Considerable information has been obtained both from Cambodian and Siamese chronicles and inscriptions, but the best authority only came to our knowledge a few years ago by a lucky chance. This is the report made by a Chinese Ambassador, Tcheou Ta Kouan, on his mission to the ruler of Angkor in the year 1295 A.D., which report has lately been found among the Chinese records and has been translated in the *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*.

We learn that during the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. a Greater Cambodian kingdom extended far beyond the boundaries of the present country, including great portions of Siam and Annam, and acknowledging the rule of a powerful king. The people were called Khmers, or sometimes descendants of Kambu, "Kambu-ja," from which Europeans have formed the name Cambodia. King Yasovarman, who reigned from 880 to 908, was the actual founder of the royal city of Angkor—Angkor Thom—to which he transferred his residence. From the very beginning this city was distinguished by the taste and magnificence with which it was built and laid out. A quadrangular outer wall of ten miles in circumference was erected ;

five monumental gates with richly carved superstructures pierced this wall ; ponds with handsome balustrades were constructed ; palace after palace rose ; and in the middle of the square city appeared the temple of Bayon, the masterpiece of Khmer architecture, with its imposing mass, its handsome elevation, and its inexhaustible wealth of varied and delicate ornament. The Chinese Ambassador states that this temple, which was dedicated to the Brahman god Siva, stood in the actual centre of the Khmer kingdom. Yasovarman also built a royal palace and a temple of Vishnu, called Phimanakas, " the castle in the air." In the neighbourhood of the latter he constructed an immensely high and long terrace, from which he could mount the elephants standing below. The sides of the terrace are decorated with life-size elephants carved in stone ; the central part, which was evidently reserved for the monarch himself, bears figures of the fabulous *garudas*, eagles with the head and shoulders of a man. One is reminded of Browning's beautiful words on " lyric love, half angel and half bird," but the symbol, which even to-day denotes royal rank in Siam, is certainly intended as a glorification of the sovereign's high-mindedness and foresight. A neighbouring terrace is called by the Chinese diplomatist " the leprous King's terrace," and upon it is found a statue of a naked, shrunken man, but there is no evidence of the great builder himself having been attacked by this disease.

That would have been a cruel fate, for Yasovarman deserves to be honoured as the author of some of the finest and best-planned buildings in the world. His immediate successor continued his work at Angkor Thom, but one of his brothers removed the capital to another place, where it remained under the next King also. In the year 944 King Rajendravarman returned to Angkor Thom, "which had long lain waste," and restored, extended, and in many ways beautified the city, a work which was continued by his sons and successors. Several of these kings left behind them inscriptions, some in Sanskrit, some in the Khmer language, which have assisted in the identification of many of the buildings enumerated by the Chinese envoy.

If Angkor Thom forms the more extensive of the two groups of ruins, the other, Angkor Wat, is no less remarkable. "Wat" means temple, and is here applied to the great and beautiful edifice planned and commenced by King Suryavarman II., who reigned from 1112 to 1162. Angkor Wat was continued by his son, Jayavarman VII., who also left it unfinished; for several of the reliefs have remained in the rough and show that the work was interrupted. Nevertheless, both city and temple continued in good repair, as Tcheou Ta Kouan remarks in 1295 that the stones are well joined together and no grass has found its way into the buildings.

But even before his time a Siamese force had

camped before Angkor and ravaged its neighbourhood ; and in the fourteenth century the Siamese attacks were repeated, Angkor fell into the hands of the enemy and was in great part destroyed. It is true that the Khmers succeeded in retaking the city, but they abandoned it for good at the close of the fourteenth century, and transferred the capital of their weakened and dwindling kingdom to more southerly regions. Angkor Thom was completely deserted ; the sacred character of Angkor Wat was the cause of a school of priests remaining in the vicinity of the temple, together with a small population of fishermen and peasants, who supplied the holy men with the necessaries of life. Otherwise Angkor was abandoned to oblivion, destruction, and the jungle, which for five centuries have reigned there undisturbed.

In 1909 the French Government appointed a "Conservateur du Groupe d'Angkor," the archæologist M. Commaille, who in a short time has rendered great services in the preservation and exploration of Angkor. From the work of him and his young assistant it may be hoped that these wonderful ruins will be better cared for in future, and that they will be forced to give up their long-kept secrets.

The Swedish flag at the bungalow was now beginning to flap in a gentle breeze, the worst of the heat was over, and we set out to walk to the temple. Close beside the bungalow

lies the priests' school, with its little huts of straw and palm-leaves ; a broad and well-made road runs in a northerly direction to Angkor Thom ; and on the right is a moat, 200 yards wide, which surrounds the whole group of the temple buildings. The moat still contained water, but it was low and brown, and for the most part covered with green weed. Numerous groups of leaves showed where the water-lily and lotus flower in their season, but this was not the time of year. During some months the moat is filled with water from the Siem Reap, and then mirrors the towers and terraces of Angkor Wat among the palms that grow freely on the edge of the moat, in places where the balustrade has disappeared. Across the moat runs a broad causeway of stone, bordered on each side by a stone balustrade in the form of a serpen — Nāga—which at each end of the balustrade and wherever the causeway widens into a platform, raises its seven richly ornamented heads. When we had crossed the moat, we were faced by the outer enclosure, an almost square covered colonnade or portico, the four sides of which, each measuring about a kilometre, surround the temple and its park. The whole colonnade is of stone, as is the avenue which, after one has passed through a monumental and richly ornamented gateway, extends through the park between the outer enclosure and the ground floor of the temple itself, which in its turn rests upon a terrace 6 feet high.

The prospect, as we came through the gateway of the outer colonnade, was magnificent. Before us rose the imposing rectangular mass of the ancient temple in three storeys, the two lower ones consisting of covered galleries enclosing a rectangle, in the middle of which a lofty terrace supports the third storey. The long side of the lowest storey measures 820 feet ; the highest, the floor of which stands 62 feet above the ground floor, is a square measuring 190 feet each way. The highest storey is crowned by five convex towers, one at each corner and one over the holy of holies in the centre of the building. The galleries of the first and second storeys form projecting pavilions at the corners, which in the case of the second storey are crowned by low, square towers, partly destroyed. But otherwise it is surprising how little destruction, or even damage, there is. Nothing essential is lacking to the monumental unity of the edifice ; the details are here and there in fragments, but lie where they fell, so manifestly undisturbed that one imagines it would be easy to put everything in its place again. The plan, with the three rectangles rising on lofty terraces one inside the other and connected by steep flights of steps ; the esplanade and the temple park outside ; round that again the galleries of the outer enclosure, four kilometres in length, and finally the great temple moat framing the whole—this entire symmetrical idea can now be grasped by the beholder as clearly as when it first

occurred to the architect of King Suryavarman eight centuries ago. The vegetation which flourished in the galleries, steps, and courts of the temple, and which was the cause of most of the destruction, has already been cleared away in the few years that French explorers have been at work. The dense foliage of the surrounding park, with its palms and bamboo thickets, has been left, but in the temple itself no other colour is seen than the light grey of the sandstone and in the foundations of the terraces the warm brown of the limonite. For the whole building is of sandstone, on a base, 6 feet high, of limonite. The geometrical perspicuity of the rectangular plan gives it the strongest impression of unity, greatness, and calm solemnity; the pyramidal arrangement with terraces decreasing in area as they rise, gives an impression of aspiration which we meet with again in the Gothic cathedrals of Christendom. And with these Angkor has another feature in common, the extraordinary richness of its decoration. But hardly in Europe, and perhaps nowhere in the world, could such a wealth of sculpture be found as is to be seen at Angkor. In the galleries of the lowest storey alone 2000 square metres are covered with a frieze, representing in relief historical events from the chronicles of Cambodia, with inscriptions identifying the chief personages; scenes from the heavens and hells of Brahmanism, and again a number of episodes from the Indian legend of



CELESTIAL DANCING GIRLS.

[To face p. 180.

70 1940
Abstract

Rama, the Ramayana. A whole wall, for instance, represents the famous story of a battle between apes and devils, in which the ally of the former, the gigantic serpent Nāga, lent the apes his body to churn the sea. The sea curdled as in a milk-churn into a firm mass, on which the apes and the hero Rama, whom they befriended, were able to cross from India to Ceylon and there rescue the abducted heroine.

The efforts of the European architects to supply in their churches a *Biblia pauperum* for the masses unable to read have been realised in Angkor Wat. Pictures and ornaments flourish there like the most luxuriant foliage on almost every stone, with a delicacy of execution that reminds one of Greece and a richness that can only be compared with the marvellous works of the Moors in Spain. Besides the great series of reliefs, which are chiefly to be found on the outer galleries of the lowest storey, there are numerous panels of stone, on which men and animals, mostly lions, are represented within richly ornamented frames. A favourite and oft-repeated motive is that of the celestial dancing-girls, *apsaras*, a sort of *corps de ballet* of angels, whose brilliant costumes, as well as their contortions of arms, legs, and hands, may be recognised to-day in the royal ballet at Pnom Penh, showing that the latter follows traditions nearly a thousand years old. These dancing angels are

shown in nearly all the sculptures of the second storey.

The first storey is connected with the second by covered flights of steps, divided by many small landings, and these stairways in their turn divide the area of the court into smaller, square basins, the floors of which descend in steps and are filled with water. On the north and south, on separate, lofty pedestals beyond the galleries of the first storey, stand two smaller, rectangular, temple-like buildings of great beauty, the purpose of which is unknown; they have been given the name of libraries.

On approaching the enclosed court of the second storey from the main entrance on the west, we also find two smaller pavilions of similar appearance, one on each side of the bridge leading to the central terrace. These are called the small libraries, though their purpose and use are equally unknown. The floor of the second court is sunk two feet below the pavement running along its sides, but bridges of stone lead from the latter to the middle of the court, crossing each other at right angles. In the centre rises the third terrace, 42 feet high, reached by a steep flight of 40 high and narrow steps. On arriving there the spirit of the building changes, and one feels that the sanctuary is at hand; the sculptures become fewer and more subdued, there are no more open bays in the walls of the galleries, and the light filters sparingly in through the close

balustrading of the windows ; all is semi-darkness and seclusion. At the same time the height is so great that the air feels lighter, no noise is heard from below, and at the four doorways, the only places from which a view can be obtained, the whole landscape is spread out like a panorama, and one surveys the wooded plains, the lofty trees, and the distant hills without feeling near them. A better spot for meditation and converse on the great problems of life could not be conceived. The cruciform galleries offer opportunities for philosophic strolling, nothing from the outer world disturbs the thoughts ; sun and air are to be found in the small courts between the galleries, in the latter twilight reigns and darkness in the rectangular pavilions under the corner towers. Spell-bound we approached the holy of holies, the centre of the building, but found there nothing but a narrow little cell without windows, without decoration of any kind, and with an altar from which the image had disappeared, presumably carried off by the Siamese. . Undoubtedly the cell had once been closed, but now there is no door before the narrow entrance.

The darkness, plainness, and small size of the innermost sanctuary remind one of the holy of holies, *oku-no-in*, of the Japanese temples. These are generally situated at a little distance from the main temple, and always at a greater height, as high as possible, in fact ; but when, after ascending a steep and narrow flight of steps, one

arrives at the sanctuary, expecting increased magnificence, one finds a small, empty wooden hut, without decoration of any kind. The East, with its love of symbols, has assuredly not created this design without a meaning. Can it be that the friezes of the first storey are intended to exhort the beholder to a noble and active life in the stirring and eventful life of the senses, the *apsaras* of the second storey to foreshadow the purer joys of beauty, tenderness and contemplation, and the rigid simplicity of the third to show him that the highest spiritual riches, wisdom, love and holiness, are to be sought in the depths of his own nature and cannot be expressed in sensuous forms?

I was meditating on these questions, while our French archæologist told us that it has been suggested by some scholars that this temple was used for mysteries like those we read of in Egypt and Eleusis. The basins of the first and second storeys were perhaps intended for the ordeals of water and fire, and the small "libraries" at the foot of the highest flight of steps may have been the secluded chambers in which the neophyte waited to be led up the steep stairs to the higher initiation.

Dusk was coming on, and a certain fatigue took possession of our senses, which that day had witnessed so much that was new and unaccustomed. We carefully climbed down the narrow steps from terrace to terrace, stood at last on the esplanade, and passed along the imposing avenue to the stately

portal of the outer enclosure, crossed the moat by the broad causeway, and were soon back in the lap of Western civilisation at our simple but comfortable bungalow.

But on the verandah we were met by an old priest, enveloped, as the rule is, in a yellow mantle which leaves the arms and right shoulder bare, bare-headed, bare-footed, and with shaven head. He was next in rank to the supreme priest of Cambodia, and was the principal of the school at Angkor, where the young bonzes or priests learn the Pali language. He wished to invite the foreign Princess and the son of the King of Cambodia to visit his school. Prince Monivong had unfortunately been indisposed all day, but Princess Marie, to whom fatigue is unknown, was ready at once to accompany the holy man. Outside it was already evening, the fireflies were flitting about with their mysterious lights, the bare-footed natives moved noiselessly as shadows, the spicy scent from the flowers of the enclosure was growing fainter, and the first stars had come out, as we walked to the straw huts where the pupils acquire the rudiments of the sacred speech.

We clambered up a stair, which was more like a ladder, to the door of a roomy straw hut, resting on lofty piles, and on entering saw some twenty youths and boys with shaven heads and yellow priestly robes. They bowed low before the Princess and the other visitors, and then stood silently in the

semi-darkness. By the light of a few paraffin-lamps we were shown part of the school library, ancient manuscripts written on palm-leaves, which were fastened together by purple silk threads. The bundles of leaves, or at all events the more precious of these manuscripts, were preserved in pieces of old brocade, which seemed to be of great beauty; but it was surprising that such precious things should be kept in such inflammable surroundings.

Our conversation with his reverence was somewhat halting, as the Cambodian interpreter's French was hard to understand; but we learned that the manuscripts contained the three "baskets" of the Buddhist scriptures; that the Pali language was a daughter of the Sanskrit and was the ecclesiastical speech of the Southern Buddhist Church, while Tibetan was that of the Northern; and that the old priest would be very glad to visit Europe and especially France—if only some one would pay his passage. He also told us that Angkor Wat was commenced as a Brahman sanctuary, but that Buddhism had made its victorious entry into the country while the building was still in progress, and that the detached statues which have been found in the temple and are now collected in one of the galleries, represent either Buddha himself or Buddhist saints. The change of religion would probably have no great influence on the structure and decoration of the temple, since it was regarded as the mission of Buddhism to fulfil, and not to



ANGKOR WAT : STEPS TO THE THIRD STOREY.

[To face p. 186.]

70 1911
1911-1912

destroy Brahmanism, and the mythology of the older faith might be freely used as symbols of the newer. Therefore the Buddhist sovereigns left the images of Siva, Vishnu and the rest undisturbed.

The following morning, January 14, was calm and clear, and the leaders of our expedition, MM. Outrey and Littaye, had made all arrangements for visiting the ancient capital itself, Angkor Thom. We rode for a mile on native ponies through lofty and shady trees, among which huge remains of statues by the roadside attracted our attention. During the dominion of the Khmer kings a whole company of seated giants of stone had lined both sides of the road outside the city gate, and between them and over their knees curled a gigantic Nāga. Now only fragments are to be seen of what was once the grandest balustrade in the world. This mighty avenue of giants led up to a moat, beyond which rose a towering gateway, lofty and almost terrifying, the upper part of which was formed by four colossal human heads, all alike, gazing to the four points of the compass with an enigmatic smile. The same image, called Brahma's face, crowns all the five gates of the city. Was it intended to depict the godhead, Brahma, in these terrible visages, with their great expressionless eyes, their beardless lips full of cruelty and cunning? Perhaps; but in that case it is the god of a race of warriors, whose worship calls for blood and painful sacrifices.

On riding through the gateway and turning round, one is met by the same cruel smile, the same cold stare from another of the four faces, from which nothing can be hidden. On both sides of the gateway, as far as the eye can reach, extend the remains of the once proud city walls of Angkor Thom, now half fallen.

We went on, among nothing but ruins, along a road which has lately been laid out by the Archæological Commission and which runs between dense thickets, trees and bushes. While Angkor Wat was kept in some sort of repair by pious hands, the jungle has ruled supreme and undisturbed for five centuries in Angkor Thom, and its conquest of the city has been rendered easier by the fact that the stones of the buildings are not held together by mortar, but laid loosely upon each other. The roots of trees and the arms of creepers have found small gaps between the blocks and have thrust in their shoots, which have grown and broken up the surface, over which they now spread their luxuriant foliage. Thus a teeming vegetation with gorgeous flowers is everywhere to be seen among ruinous walls and delicate carvings. What a city this must have been in its pride, before the Siamese came in and destroyed the temples, and before the Khmers themselves found it too large for their waning strength to defend, and therefore sought a more modest capital ! Wherever we looked the ruins were always of



ANGKOR THOM: ONE OF THE CITY GATES.

[To face p. 123.

70 1990
100 1991

stone, hardly ever of brick, and it was only after riding over half a mile through the jungle that we came upon a type of the modern Cambodian house—a newly erected *sālā* or rest-house, where ponies may be left, and where travellers may find shade under a thatched roof and within walls of palm-leaves.

Close to the *sālā* stand the remains of the city's greatest and most remarkable temple, Bayon. The derivation of this name is unknown, but the temple was erected and dedicated to Siva by King Yasovarman, the founder of Angkor Thom, about nine hundred years after Christ, and is called by the Chinese Ambassador already referred to, the masterpiece of Khmer architecture. In size Bayon does not rival Angkor Wat, but like the latter it consists of an outer rectangular enclosure and three storeys lying inside and above one another, of which the two lower ones are composed of rectangular galleries, richly decorated with carved reliefs. The third storey rises in the form of a cross, and supports in the centre an immense tower, the base of which measures 49 feet in section. But most characteristic of Bayon are the fifty lower towers which grow up out of the second and third storeys, all shaped like a long human head with the four impenetrable faces of Brahma, all alike and all crowned with a diadem. The central tower rises higher and dominates the rest, but its sides consist of the same crowned face, only larger.

Bayon can only be entered from one side, so deeply buried is it in creepers, and both the outer wall and the galleries of the first storey are to a great extent destroyed. But the great blocks of freestone are still on the spot, though shifted from their places by enemies or by the jungle. We clambered over obstacles round the great rectangle, a total length of over 500 yards, everywhere admiring the reliefs, which represented Court festivals and battles between Siamese and Cambodian warriors, besides numerous images of the gods of Brahmanism. One whole wall is occupied by interesting sculptures of a village on a river bank, and depicts the daily occupations of the inhabitants, which are not very different from those at present followed on the banks of the Mekong.

There was a crackling in the brushwood outside the gallery where we were, we heard men shouting and had a glimpse of something black moving among the trees. It was elephants that M. Outrey had sent to give his Swedish guests a more realistic impression of the life of bygone days in the royal city of the Khmers.

Over fallen heaps of stones, which had once been monumental flights of steps, we went up to the triple gallery of the second storey, which has a colonnade on the outer side, a stone wall sculptured in relief on both sides in the centre, and beyond this two colonnades with vaulted roofs.

Here the hands of enemies have wrought widespread destruction. It is difficult to understand how the mighty columns can have been broken to pieces and dragged from their places under the splendid balustrade, but the Siamese seem to have harnessed elephants with ropes to the columns and thus destroyed what men would have been unable to move.

Here too everything was richly decorated, but while in Angkor Wat one can walk freely through all the passages, the ruinous state of these galleries makes it very difficult to explore them. Add to this that within the rectangular plan is enclosed a whole network of smaller passages running obliquely, that the three galleries running side by side stand on different levels, and that the level is frequently changed by steps, and one will understand why the natives call Bayon the hide-and-seek temple.

The third storey affords no very extensive view of ruins and woods, but is chiefly remarkable for the numerous towers, from which the eyes of Brahma follow the visitor everywhere. Below the central tower is a circular sanctuary, which no doubt was formerly the holy of holies. This is richly decorated with figures and panels with geometrical and floral motives of great beauty, but the sense of seclusion and sanctity that is felt in Angkor Wat is absent here. On the contrary, one's impression is that here a warlike people

honoured the gods that gave success to their arms, and that Bayon was built by a race that looked outwards, Angkor Wat by one whose eyes were turned within.

Through a network of dark passages, where bats swept past us, we came out into the sunshine again and down to the lowest terrace of Bayon, where the elephants stood waiting for us, one of them, a female, accompanied by her last-born. The playful little elephant, which was too young to bear any burden, frisked in front of its mother, and at every halt satisfied its hunger in the most charming way.

Elephants, whose strength is in their trunk, cannot carry a great weight on their backs, and a howdah does not usually hold more than two persons. Swinging their great heads, the majestic animals moved slowly off, and we gradually came near the second great object of the day's excursion, a large cleared space which is bounded by a terrace 300 yards long and from 12 to 15 feet high, called the Elephant Terrace. Its stone walls are carved with reliefs representing a line of elephants in life-size, except in the centre, where a projection with a flight of steps was clearly intended for the use of the monarch, and where the wall is decorated with *garudas*, eagles with half a human body. From this terrace and from the pavilion which probably once stood in its centre, the kings of former days were able to view processions and



THE FIFTY TOWERS OF BAYON.



THE ELEPHANT TERRACE.

[To face p. 192.]

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fight between animals on the great open space below. Our mahouts were anxious to show off the cleverness of their beasts, and—after taking the precaution of landing us from their backs on to the top of the terrace—made the elephants go up the steep flights of narrow steps and down again, which they did with great coolness.

A little farther off, in an enclosure which is bounded by the terrace, lie the remains of two great buildings, the royal palace, of which hardly one stone is now left upon another, and the better preserved pyramidal temple, which our old friend Tcheou Ta Kouan called in his description Phimanakas. The pyramid with its many flights of steps has suffered badly from vegetation, but is imposing in its height and its form. Its first storey supports a platform, decorated with galleries, within which more steps lead up to a smaller storey containing the sanctuary itself, which has four doors but no roof. The Chinese diplomatist reports that this temple, as well as the central tower of Bayon, was roofed with gold. We learned besides from our archæological companion that traces are believed to have been found in Phimanakas of moon deities, older and more bloodthirsty than the gods of Brahmanism, who were descended from the sun.

The rocking elephants then carried us to a smaller cruciform terrace, the "terrace of the leper King," already mentioned. It is not known why

it is so called, for the nude, seated statue of a man which it supports shows no sign either of leprosy or of royal dignity. Perhaps the contrast between the naked ascetic and the brilliant feasts that decorate the sides of the terrace suggested the name to the popular fancy, which loves such oppositions.

The sun was getting higher, and although there was still much to be seen of Angkor Thom, one cannot stand much exercise in a temperature of about 95°. When we reached the *sālā*, therefore, we mounted our active little Cambodian ponies again and turned their heads towards the comfort and prose of the bungalow. However, just outside the moat of Angkor Thom stands a mound called Pnom Bakheng, and those who were not afraid of heat and fatigue climbed up it and found the reward of their pains in an extensive view over the plain. Below us the wall that fenced the royal city could clearly be traced, the river Siem Reap also showed, and Angkor Wat within its great moat and the long lines of its outer enclosure. Everywhere we saw tree-tops in soft, undulating lines, and our guide pointed out that these woods concealed a number of ruins, which perhaps were only partly known and were certainly altogether unexplored. We paused for a moment at a simple hut, where a yellow-robed monk watched over one of Buddha's "footprints," cut in a rock and two yards long, and saw how the trees swarmed with

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inquisitive grey monkeys, who hopped about, playing and looking down at us. Neither they nor the green parrots in a tree close by seemed to be afraid of men, although they do not see many of them in these thinly populated and seldom visited regions.

At the bungalow a message reached us that the water was falling in Tonlé Sap and that we should have to leave Angkor that night ; accordingly the baggage was got ready and sent off by ox-carts. We ourselves intended after a siesta to pay a last visit to Angkor Wat and test the truth of a legend that one of our French friends had repeated for our benefit. The many passages of Angkor Wat and the vaults under its five towers are the home of great quantities of bats, whose fetid smell and general unpleasantness detract from the visitor's comfort. During the day they never move from their places under the roof, where they hang fast with their sharp claws. But it is said that a little after sunset they all fly in a compact body out of one of the doors of the upper storey to begin their hunt for prey, and that they fly in a phalanx under the leadership of an old bat, bigger than the rest. This story was a welcome excuse for revisiting the park in the cool of the evening and strolling through the galleries of the great temple, where the bats were now beginning to fly softly under the roof above our heads. In the great court of the second storey, where perhaps the flames of the

fiery ordeal once played between the bridges, we stopped to enjoy the view and the coolness. Like everything great and beautiful, Angkor Wat gains by repeated visits ; its decoration is too rich to be fully appreciated the first time, and its size and height are better seen when one has ceased to be surprised at the novelty of it all. The rays of the sinking sun were still gilding the steep steps leading to the mysterious third storey, whose towers glimmered against the evening sky, and the twilight hour arrived, with its thoughts of distant home and friends. A warm and mellow mezzo-soprano voice began a melancholy Russian folk-song, and the walls of the old temple, which had so often echoed to the chant of priests, resounded to the voice from the far North with its Slavonic melody. Silence fell, the shadows began to spread, but still the black inmates of the tower delayed their flight. Instead a hum was heard from below, torches were borne over the narrow bridge and up the steep steps by one yellow-robed figure after another ; it was the young priests who had desired to honour their King's guest by a torchlight procession. Shouting and singing, the youths marched through the galleries, the light of their torches showing dimly behind the close balustrading of the windows, and by degrees they assembled in the central doorway and went down the main flight of steps. We followed them, and saw the esplanade below filled with the people of the

village, who had collected to have a sight of the foreign Princess and the torchlight procession. Even a snake had been enticed out and was killed beside his seven-headed stone relative. We filed along the avenue and causeway back to the bungalow, where we entered the motor-car and nodded good-bye to the respectfully silent Cambodians. The students alone followed us for a while, running and flourishing their torches, till the car was deep in the forest on the way to Siem Reap, where the ox-carts were to meet us. But the whole forest was full of life; the bamboo paling by the edge of the road was hung with lanterns, and at every gate a family stood waiting to salute the royal guest. Young men ran alongside the car for a short distance with lighted lanterns, and candles were burning in the open doors of the huts.

Then the ox-carts took us slowly down to the river bank, where our *sampans* of the previous day were waiting to convey us to Tonlé Sap and the steam-boat. The awnings of thatch amidships had been removed, and our basket-chairs were in the open air. The starry host of the tropics gleamed overhead, while our boatmen pattered up and down with bare feet, paddling and poling by turns. All Nature was cool and silent, with a silence too solemn to be broken, and no sound was heard in the night but the strokes of the oars. At last the trees of the flooded forest rose before us, the water ran more rapidly under our keels, and the countless

lights of fishing-boats, which gleamed as far as the eye could see, told us that we had reached Tonlé Sap, where the outline of our white steamboat came in sight.

We were soon on board, but the water had fallen so much that navigation was risky, and we had to wait till daybreak for fear of running on sandbanks in the dark. On the following afternoon we were again in Kompong-chnang, where the local French Resident had arranged an excursion and a battue; and we dined at his house, where none of the elegant furniture was of Asiatic origin, but all came from la belle France.

The large and handsome steamer *Battambang* had been sent here to meet us, and next morning we woke in our comfortable cabins off Pnom Penh. M. Outrey, who as Résident Supérieur occupied a large and handsome house at Pnom Penh, had invited the whole party from Angkor to an Annamese *déjeuner*, and on entering his dining-room we found every inch of the table covered with little porcelain bowls, each containing a different kind of food. It was the biggest collection of *hors d'œuvre* I have ever seen, with one hundred and thirty-six varieties. Thank Heaven, we did not have to eat them all!

Our gracious Duchess had sent word through Prince Monivong to King Sisowath that she would be glad to visit his wives and daughters, and an hour was fixed for the visit. Shortly before

we left, a message came from the palace that the gentlemen of Her Imperial Highness's suite would also be welcome, which caused a certain surprise and satisfaction among them. On arrival we were received by His Majesty himself, who, as on the former occasion, was amiability itself. He had three of his daughters present, dressed in national costumes, and he showed us a number of his treasures, objects of gold, richly set with precious stones. His Majesty also distributed presents of silk to all his visitors, but to the Duchess's inquiry as to the possibility of visiting the four hundred and fifty wives, the reply was that they did not possess such toilettes as would be suitable for receiving so exalted a guest. We were shown instead a sort of museum, where works of art made in the palace itself, silks and objects of stone and metal, were exhibited. The visit of the Duchess was returned later in the afternoon on behalf of the King by one of his nephews, a son of the late King Norodom, a sympathetic and intelligent young Prince with a charming wife.

With genuine regret we left Pnom Penh that evening on the *Battambang*. It was not only the city's beautiful situation and its atmosphere of comfort, but above all the kindness that had been shown to the Swedish visitors by all, and especially by the Cambodian royal family and M. Outrey the Resident, that made us feel warmly attached to the capital of that Cambodia whose magnificent ancient

monuments we had been permitted to see in such favourable circumstances and had so greatly admired.

"Au revoir!" the King had said to us, and the same words were addressed to us by our French hosts at parting. But life is uncertain, and who knows whether any of us will ever revisit this beautiful country with its gentle and friendly people and its memories of such monumental magnificence and beauty? If the lines I have written arouse some kindly feeling for Cambodia and some appreciation of her ancient art, they will have repaid but a very small part of the debt of gratitude that is profoundly felt by their author.

The next afternoon we landed at Mytho and took the train to Saigon. A few minutes after our arrival another train rolled into the station, and out of it, deeply tanned by his shooting-trip, jumped His Royal Highness Prince William, to whom I now respectfully surrender the pen.

CHAPTER XI

MOIS AND BUFFALOES

IT has often been said that East Africa is the only really good place for big-game shooting. I admit that I have never had the chance of visiting that part of the world, though it is nevertheless pretty familiar to me from the number of books on sport and travel that are accessible to one interested in Nature and wild life. But for all that, I venture to assert that there is another sporting Eldorado, which in the matter of big game may certainly compare with the African wilds, and that is Cochin-China and Annam, in the peninsula of Farther India. Here the wild elephants still roam in freedom through the jungles, in many parts without ever having been disturbed by man; here thousands of wild buffaloes raise their curved horns above the high grass of the prairies, threatening, with the right of the stronger, any intruder on their wide pastures; here thick-skinned rhinoceroses tread their hidden paths through dense thickets, and soft-footed tigers and leopards steal through the half-light of the jungle, lying in wait for their unsuspecting prey, while sportive monkeys leap

from branch to branch. The bird world is also richly represented, from the gaudy peacock to the shrieking parrot, the grotesque hornbill or the brilliant bird of paradise. The antelope species, on the other hand, are not nearly so numerous as in East Africa ; and the zebra, of course, is altogether absent.

That these regions are so little known is due no doubt to the great difficulties 'connected with fitting out a shooting expedition. For there are no hunters by profession, accustomed to provide and lead a *safari*, and the natives only lend themselves very reluctantly to such an enterprise. Many of the best shooting districts are infested with fever and altogether uninhabitable at certain times of the year. Besides this, a number of the tribes in the interior are savage and not to be relied on, for which reason one is compelled to travel in company with somebody who knows them and is familiar with their manners and customs. Particularly necessary is it to know about their "dangerous days," for woe to the European who enters an apparently peaceful village on such a day ; within twenty-four hours he is a dead man, either from a spear in the back, or still oftener from poisoned water or rice.

It was thus, I may say, a pure piece of luck that I ever had the chance of using a rifle in this part of the world. As already mentioned, there happened to be in Saigon the Duke of Montpensier,

a keen and experienced sportsman ; familiar with the various districts, he has already traversed the whole country—often alone—many times and in different directions, and much big game has been made to bite the dust by his never-failing energy and sureness of aim. He it is above all, together with his friend Oddéra—a Frenchman, a sportsman, and a lover of open-air life—that I have to thank for a few never-to-be-forgotten days on the desolate prairies below the wooded heights of Annam, an Eldorado for the sportsman on which, but for them, I should certainly never have set foot.

The day after my return from Pnom Penh the little party started off in a hot and noisy train, armed to the teeth with a very respectable arsenal of firearms, thermos flasks, kodaks, etc., besides a number of big cases of provisions and camping-gear. Our route ran in an easterly direction, alternately through rubber plantations and impenetrable jungle. When the greater part of the cooling contents of the thermos flasks had disappeared down our dusty and thirsty throats, we arrived after a few hours' journey at the little station of Chua Chang, situated in the middle of the forest. Here we were met by the local "Buffalo Bill," *alias* M. Oddéra, and the whole party rode up to his charming bungalow, where we had our quarters for the night. Our hostess appeared, accompanied by two small tame elephants, half a dozen dogs and about the same number of cats and fowls, and we

were welcomed in the kindest and most courteous way by Madame Oddéra, a bright and buxom French matron, who spared no pains to make her guests comfortable. The roomy bungalow, built of teak, looked particularly cosy and attractive with its broad verandahs running round the four walls, and it was not long before the whole party, including the domestic animals, felt perfectly at home in the place and with one another. So much so, in fact, that one of the little elephants took it into his head to march into the dining-room and snatch up some of the bananas from the dinner-table. Round the house was a neat little garden full of flowers. But judge of my surprise when on one of the beds I discovered big strawberry plants, with splendid ripe strawberries! Imported from France, they seemed to thrive remarkably well, and were evidently Madame Oddéra's special pride. Chua Chang is the only place in this part of the world that can show such dainties. And that was not all—on a fairly high hill close by the squatter's energetic wife has even got wild strawberries to ripen.

And at the dainty dinner, which not long after made its appearance on the massive teak table, prepared by the hostess herself according to all the mysteries of the French cuisine, we had an opportunity of tasting this Northern fruit, sighing in secret over the insipid mangosteens and everlasting bananas of the East. Later in the evening shooting stories followed each other in rapid

succession, and the night was already far advanced before Lewenhaupt, the undersigned, a cat and a dog, were finally able in the same room to enjoy a few hours of much-needed rest.

Precisely at sunrise we started from the comfortable bungalow. The object was to avail ourselves of the refreshing coolness of the morning hours, so as to be able to spare the ponies in the midday heat. A powerful but not very melodious concert of hundreds of monkeys from the neighbouring hill accompanied our departure. "That is the men-monkeys coming home from the club and getting it hot from their wives," suggested one of the party, and really it did not sound much better. Followed by these howls, the long caravan moved off, and soon found itself on an endless winding path through the dark jungle that separates Chua Chang from the wide expanse of the open prairies.

In front marched a group of natives with the lighter baggage, and foremost among them a guide, in the simple but convenient costume of Adam, swinging with a contented air a big black umbrella over his fuzzy head. This article, however, was not merely for show. Besides being a symbol of power and authority (for he was the "old man" of a little village), it was used to great advantage for hitting the other porters over the shins. Then came the sportsmen on horseback—the Duke and I on two Andalusian steeds, the others on shaggy and sturdy ponies—and finally the heavier baggage,

provisions, etc., in creaking ox-carts with enormous, massive wooden wheels. In my innocence I suggested greasing the axles to reduce the noise. But it appeared that that was just the best part of it, as the strident sound was calculated to dissuade a possibly lurking tiger from attacking. And it is certain that in the stillness of the forest the caravan could be heard three miles off.

Last of all came Oddéra. This man, remarkable in many ways, is well worthy of closer acquaintance. About twenty years ago he emigrated—on account of an unhappy love affair, it is said—to Cochin-China, where he vanished completely for a number of years. He spent this time among the wild race of Mois, living like one of themselves and supporting himself by hunting and fishing. With a perfect command of their language and an intimate knowledge of their peculiar manners and customs, he gradually acquired such influence over the race that to this day he is universally known as “le Roi des Mois.” Meanwhile the affair of the heart arranged itself; he returned to civilisation, married his first love, and now leads a happy family life in his bungalow at Chua Chang as one of the most valued and trusted officials of the French Government. But as soon as any question crops up concerning the Mois, the authorities always have to seek Oddéra’s help, for without his intervention they cannot get a single one of these savages to do anything willingly. I soon learned to like and

esteem this child of nature—blunt and taciturn, but with a frank and winning manner—and to see in him a type not only of the confident and daring sportsman, but also of the lover of Nature and the friend of man.

After a six hours' uninterrupted ride, mostly through thick jungle, where lianas and creepers formed an entangled confusion among the trunks and branches of the great trees, we reached at last the goal of our journey: a fairly large and roomy bamboo hut built upon lofty piles, situated just on the edge of the forest, and only half a mile from the great open plains. The most remarkable thing about the building, however, was the total absence of nails; all the joints were either accurately morticed together or lashed with thin cane, a plant which grows abundantly in these regions and is used for pretty nearly everything. This was to be our headquarters for the next few days, and we soon made ourselves at home in our airy but convenient dwelling, inspecting rifles and cartridges and getting ready for our coming exertions.

At dusk the Mois arrived. There were about twenty of them, men and women; the former with tall, well-proportioned frames and regular, far from ugly features; the latter of smaller stature and anything but handsome according to Western ideas. The costume of both sexes was the least imaginable: the women wore a shawl round their

waists and long rows of glass beads round their necks; the men had big pieces of bamboo in their ears, in which they kept snuff, tobacco, betel, etc., thus forming an excellent substitute for pockets. I happened to have the pleasure of seeing one of their ears without its bamboo decoration; the lobe was so distended that it reached down to the shoulder and there lay in several folds. This will give an idea of the size and storage capacity of the ear-ornaments.

There are about 100,000 members of the race, but their descent is a matter of some uncertainty; probably they are a mixture of Malays and Annamese. Most of them are nomads who live by hunting and fishing, while a small number have settled in fixed abodes and carry on a meagre and primitive form of agriculture. Their huts are like big dove-cotes on lofty piles, with a ladder of plaited cane. Usually two or three families inhabit one of these dwellings, which however only contain one room. A post in the middle forms the boundary between "meum and tuum," but things must be rather mixed all the same, when men, women, children, dogs, and fowls have to pig together on a floor space of only a few square yards. Their weapons consist of a long spear, a bow and arrows; the former is well rubbed with a very powerful poison prepared from a liana root, against which no remedy is of any use, death ensuing inevitably within a few hours.



BUFFALO CARTS AT THE CAMP.



MOIS.

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Their shooting is very accurate, and at 50 to 100 yards their arrows seldom fail to hit the mark.

The savages were told off to a corner of the wide verandah which surrounded our bamboo house on every side, and here they squatted down with a big earthenware jar among them, from the mouth of which a long reed projected. The jar contained rice-brandy, a fairly strong, acid-tasting drink, with which they like to intoxicate themselves on special occasions. Then followed a ceremony intended to propitiate the deities of hunting and dispose them favourably towards the expedition of the following day; for, if any game fell, the devout worshippers were certain of getting their allotted share of the prey. The men chanted a monotonous song, while the women—with their backs turned to the spectators—hammered on half a dozen gongs that had been brought with them. When this had gone on for about half an hour, the singing suddenly stopped, and all the whites present were ceremoniously invited to take a pull from the big stone jar. Then followed a long, incomprehensible speech from the leader of the Mois, who concluded by presenting us with a chicken and a few eggs. The singing began again, and now the rice-brandy passed from mouth to mouth among the blacks, who greedily sucked up the relished drink. Then by degrees the jar was emptied, and one by one they staggered down

to the camp-fires to sleep off their liquor and renew their strength for another day.

Soon the impenetrable darkness of the tropical night settled down over the camp. The fires were tended, so that the embers might glow all night, and powerful acetylene lamps were placed on the three ladders leading to the house, to keep off any tiger who might think of making a nocturnal call. All was silent and still, as silent as only a sleeping jungle can be, separated from the roar of civilisation by leagues of almost impenetrable wilderness.

It was still dark when we mounted our ponies the following morning. We had to be on the ground by sunrise, and hunt during the coolest hours of the day, before the buffaloes took their rest in the midday heat. At an easy pace we rode through the belt of forest which separated the camp from the prairies, and soon we came out on to the latter. Here a sight met my eyes which I shall be slow to forget, and the beauty of which was worthy of being immortalised by the brush of a master. Before us lay the immense plain in its majestic desolation, covered by a thin grey mist, above which the tree-tops projected here and there like green islands. In the background rose the lofty wooded hills of Annam, behind which the sun was just beginning to show as an orange-coloured ball. By degrees the mist cleared away and the ground was all spangled with silver,

as the first rays shone upon the thousands of dewdrops which hung like diamonds upon the gossamer threads between the quivering blades of grass.

But there was no time for losing oneself in contemplation, for suddenly the leader pulled up his pony, raised his arm and pointed to some dark specks in the tall grass. Buffaloes! We were out of the saddle in a second, and then began a rather troublesome advance on all-fours along the wet ground, which was still black and sooty from a prairie fire. After a while, six animals could be distinguished, grazing peacefully by a pool of mud. Slowly and cautiously we crept forward till we were within about a hundred paces of the animals, when our way was suddenly barred by an impassable swamp. But Oddéra knew what to do. Hidden in the grass, which was nearly as high as a man, he began to imitate the melancholy bleating of a young buffalo-calf with amazing faithfulness. The dark monsters immediately stopped grazing, turned their heads in the direction of the sound, and then began cautiously to approach. But they also seemed to find the ground too swampy, and after a few steps they halted, evidently disinclined to continue the advance. It was in vain that our "buffalo-calf" tried to entice them nearer with his most insinuating plaints; they only stood still and stared.

As it was clear that we could not reduce the

range in any way, it was decided to let them have it from where we were. I was to open fire, and immediately after a .475 covered express bullet lodged somewhere in the chest of the bull on the extreme right, who then received two more well-aimed shots from the Duke and Oddéra, bringing him to the ground. The other animals also had a reminder of our presence from Lewenhaupt's rifle, but unfortunately none of them was brought down, and they all got away in the tall grass. An enveloping movement—partly to avoid the swamp, partly to approach the wounded animal from behind (a rule which should always be followed in this kind of shooting)—brought us up to the buffalo, which was now dispatched with a shot in the forehead. He was a fine old bull with particularly handsome and powerful horns and well-developed "rings." For the first time I was able fully to appreciate the immense size of these animals; a full-grown man just reaches up to the back, and the huge neck is far more powerfully developed than in any fighting bull I have seen killed in the Spanish bull-ring.¹ Truly a worthy and imposing object for a sportsman's bullet.

After he had been duly photographed, we went on across the plain. Here and there a few dark specks showed up at long range among the green, or a pair of pointed horns, like caliper

¹ Their weight varies between 1 and 2 tons.

compasses, rose above the tall grass; but the buffaloes had evidently been warned by the first volley, and preferred to retire rather than brave the unknown danger. Suddenly a fine bull appeared from the nearest "island" of jungle (these islands were to be seen all over the plain), stopped for a moment staring at us in a very defiant attitude, put his head down between his forelegs, snorted once or twice, and came slowly towards us in this position, evidently with anything but friendly intentions. It was the work of an instant to jump out of the saddle and snatch the rifle, but before I could get it up to my shoulder a well-aimed shot rang out from the Duke, which was enough to make our opponent change his mind. He staggered, went on a few steps, received two more bullets in his chest, and then sank together in a big, dark, shapeless mass. A few fresh shot-wounds in his body showed clearly enough that he was one of the animals hit that morning, which, thanks to his intrepidity and fighting spirit, had thus been freed from further pain.

The sun was rising higher and higher in the cloudless sky; it was getting on for noon and the heat became more intense every moment. We therefore decided to allow both our ponies and ourselves a few hours' necessary shade and rest, and rode to the nearest "jungle island," at which the rest of the *safari* also arrived by degrees.

Great quantities of cane grew here, and in a few minutes the handy natives had plaited together a table and benches of this flexible but strong material, upon which we then partook of a dainty shooting-lunch. Close to our resting-place ran a fair-sized stream, on the banks of which herons and storks promenaded at their ease, and now and then the smooth surface was ruffled by the appearance of dark objects, which vanished again as quickly as they had come up. These were alligators, which thus followed our rustic meal with covetous eyes, and doubtless felt strongly inclined to come out and snatch some of the good things.

As soon as the worst of the midday heat was over, we got into the saddle again and swept the plain with the field-glasses. A number of axis deer were to be seen here and there in the grass or flying swiftly across the open spaces. The Duke—one of the best shots I have ever seen—had the chance of making an unusually fine double; at his first shot a deer fell at 150 yards, and at his second a large eagle, which at that moment came flying over our heads, only to fall to the ground with a .405 express bullet through its body.

At last a solitary buffalo was sighted. This time it was Lewenhaupt who with a fine shot put the first bullet in its shoulder. It was a large cow with long, pointed horns, which at

present form part of the fine and varied collection of trophies at Aske.

The sun was already low, and it was time to think of returning. In spite of our fairly active pace we did not manage to reach home before darkness came on, and the last part of the way through the jungle was covered by torchlight. In this light the lofty trees, with their entwining creepers, looked if possible more grotesque than by day. It was as though they stretched out thousands of long, greedy arms after the venturesome traveller who boldly intruded into their insidious mazes.

On the following day we went through a most exciting adventure, which I believe is at present unique of its kind. At any rate, M. Oddéra, who has taken part in the shooting of over a thousand buffaloes, had never before been exposed to anything of the kind.

We had ridden about the prairie all the morning without seeing a living thing, and the sun had already begun to be warmer than was pleasant, when suddenly the dark backs of some buffaloes appeared above the high grass. We joyfully jumped off our ponies, which were led away to a little wood, and began the usual advance on all-fours. When we had kept this up a good while and thought we were within range, we cautiously looked up over the grass. Just so, the range was good, and before us in a wide semicircle

stood, not merely the two or three animals we expected to find, but between twenty and thirty big buffaloes, all staring in our direction. The shots came almost simultaneously, though without any apparent effect. The whole herd wheeled about and made off at a slow jog-trot. We got up in annoyance and stood for a moment looking at the retreating game, when suddenly they made an abrupt turn and began to come straight at us. Nor was that all. From a pool of mud close by, which we had not observed from our prone position, one dark monster after another rose and joined the hunted animals; and soon, at a distance of scarcely 200 yards, we had a long line of about 120 buffaloes facing us, with a front of something like 300 yards. It was a grand sight to see all these monsters coming towards one, with their necks thrown forward and all their wet muzzles at the same height, reflecting the rays of the sun and flashing like lightning. But as we were clearly the object of their wrath, and the distance between us and the onrushing avalanche was decreasing every second in an alarming way, it was high time to think of our own skins, if we did not wish to run the risk of being trampled down and crushed under the weight of the huge beasts, and afterwards forming a convenient dinner for the ever-watchful vultures.

The situation was undeniably critical. The distance to the edge of the wood, where our ponies

stood, was about five furlongs; there was thus no possibility of getting there before the avalanche was upon us. To stand still and await the attack, bring down a few animals and then be trampled by the rest, did not seem to us very attractive either. A few shots at the leader of the herd—a fine old cow, whose enormous horns I would have given a good deal at that moment to be able to add to my other trophies—hit their mark well, but did nothing to check the violence of the attack. Within a moment they would be upon us, and there was nothing else for it but to take our chance and run for bare life. It was really one of the most exasperating moments I have ever experienced: to be forced, with a good rifle in one's hand, to take to flight before all this splendid big game. But necessity knows no law, and so we ran.

The wild hunt went on for about a hundred yards, the distance between us and our pursuers was constantly decreasing, and the shelter of the wood was still far off. It looked pretty hopeless.

Then the galloping line suddenly stopped just at the spot where we had been lying and firing. Our empty cartridge-cases and presumably the scent we left behind seemed to affect their flashing muzzles unpleasantly. This gave us a moment's breathing space. A few shots were fired, one or two of the animals turned clean round, and then

the chase began again. The long line now divided itself into two, one of which continued straight on, while the other made an enveloping movement, evidently with the intention of falling on our flank. But for some reason or other they gradually slackened their pace, and only came after us at an easy jog-trot. Breathless and dripping with sweat, we at last reached our ponies, and felt ourselves once more masters of the situation.

Again the buffaloes looked like making an attack, this time on an ox-cart belonging to the *safari*, which had ventured too far in advance; but again they abandoned it.

After this, we rode back diagonally towards the herd—which stood staring at us all the time—trying to reach some scattered trees a little way from the edge of the wood, in which we were successful. In spite of the fairly long range, the big cow received several shots in the body from here, but unfortunately she did not fall. By this time the animals had evidently had enough of the game. They turned, one after another, and vanished in the high grass; and soon the place was silent and empty again, after having just been shaken by the thundering hoofs of a galloping herd of buffaloes.

I hear the reader express his astonishment that not one of the animals fell to all our shots. I need only explain that this species of buffalo is the hardest to kill of any kind of Asiatic big

game, and is provided with a layer of skin and fat over its body of about an inch in thickness. It may be mentioned as an example that one of the big bulls we brought down had no less than nine bullets in chest and shoulder before he finally fell, besides which he received two heavy revolver bullets in the neck to make him stop flinging his head about.

Our little adventure, which luckily passed off without further inconvenience—if we except a thorough sweating—occurred on January 17, and on the afternoon of the 20th the boat was to leave Saigon. It was therefore high time to think of returning, and on the following morning we said good-bye with great regret to Vo Dat, that idyllic spot in the heart of the wilderness where we had spent some exciting and never-to-be-forgotten days under the very special protection of the goddess Diana. Little did I then guess that shortly afterwards I should revisit the place and once more ride over the sun-baked prairies watching for the dark forms of buffaloes. For shortly after Lewenhaupt and I had reached Saigon and joined the rest of the party—who were just as full of Angkor and ancient Khmer civilisation as we were of buffaloes and Mois—I fell ill, was forced to keep my bed for a few days—and we missed the boat.

This was really a fatal occurrence in many ways, as the next mail did not go for a fortnight,

and the trip to India, already planned and arranged, had to be entirely altered at the last moment. Besides, I think it would be difficult to discover any more tedious occupation than lying in bed in a warm and moist tropical climate, especially when one is on the point of starting and feels quite game and full of activity. And it was with far from friendly feelings that I greeted each fresh day of enforced idleness.

But "it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good," and so it proved here. The others spent their time in visiting hospitals, schools, charitable institutions, shops, etc., and soon knew Saigon as well as they did Stockholm. When they had done the town, they took in hand the surroundings, and by the time these had been duly dispatched I was out of bed and ready for fresh adventures. As there was nothing left to see in Saigon, it was unanimously decided that we should all return to Vo Dat and enjoy a week of refreshing open-air life while waiting for the boat. And so it was that, just eight days after my first visit to the jungle, I again found myself on the same spot, though this time with a considerably larger party, as both the ladies and Rudebeck went with us.

For a week we then enjoyed the splendid free life of the wilds, riding out at sunrise and roaming over the prairies in every possible direction (though prudently keeping out of the way of any *large* herds of buffaloes!). The two ladies bravely

shared all our fatigues, and often stayed for twelve hours in the saddle without turning a hair. One day was taken up with an excursion in small dug-out canoes on the little river that flows through the middle of the plain. On its banks we came across perfectly fresh tracks both of tiger and elephant, but unfortunately we never had a glimpse of the animals themselves.

On returning to the camp-fires we often sat on the wide verandah, listening to 'Caruso or a lively two-step on the gramophone that had been brought with great trouble; or athletic sports were got up among the Mois, who entered into them with heart and soul. The savages were greatly impressed by the gramophone, which they instantly christened "the singing box," and a bit of ice, which they chanced to get hold of, passed from mouth to mouth till it came to one of the chiefs, who, to the ill-concealed annoyance of the rest, swallowed it whole. Ice received from them the appellation of "hard water."

February 1 saw us back in Saigon. It felt quite strange to be once more in civilised surroundings, sleeping in a proper bed, driving in a motor-car, and wearing one's best clothes!

On the way to the Residency—it was already dark—we met a curious procession. Shouting, shrieking, and gesticulating, a mob of white-clad Hindus were marching round the streets, swinging big torches in the form of tridents above their

heads. They were followed by an enormous car, drawn by four pure white oxen, which were hung with crimson trappings. Their horns were painted red and black, and their legs were decorated with thick silver rings, wound many times round and reaching to the hoofs. Round their necks hung heavy bells, which jingled at every step. On the car itself was a silver model, as high as a man, of an ancient temple, with a grotesquely costumed figure of Brahma decorating the front of the work of art. It was covered with little lamps of different colours, and at the sides hung gorgeous decorations of the rarest flowers the local tropical flora could offer. Two clean-shaven priests in white togas held the reins, but had some difficulty in guiding the lengthy conveyance round the corners of the narrow streets. Sometimes the car was on the pavement, sometimes it charged and bent the lamp-posts, sometimes the team refused to move and the oxen simply turned round and stood staring at their heavy load, when neither whips nor kicks could make them change their minds. But the chief thing seemed to be that the members of the procession should make plenty of row, and this they did to their hearts' content. The cause of all this hubbub was a religious festival, which was celebrated especially by the numerous wealthy Brahman merchants — *chettys* — of the town.

To call still further attention to the feast, they



MOI WARRIORS.



BAMBIAN : ONE OF THE MOI LEADERS.

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let off some magnificent fireworks later in the evening in honour of the town.

And now not much remains to be said of Cochin-China, as the s.s. *Tonkin* left the Paris of the East the following evening and steered westward for Singapore. A more cordial farewell than that which was given us can seldom have fallen to the lot of any roving tourists; my wife especially was the object of warm ovations, and the wealth of flowers that decorated her cabin during the passage defies description. The whole town came down and waved handkerchiefs, and long after the steamer had cast off we heard the cries of "Au revoir!" and "Vive la Princesse Lointaine!"

And then we were once more on the blue billows.

It was one of those marvellous, calm tropical nights with a bright full moon shining in a cloudless sky, when all Nature lies asleep in a web of the finest silver threads. The river banks glided slowly past like the scenery of a shadow play, and here and there the slack sails of *sampans* were mirrored like great bats' wings in the glittering water. Saigon with its lights and noise grew more and more distant, and soon the majestic silence of the night reigned over land and sea, only broken by the regular throbbing of the engines.

Farewell, Indo-China! Farewell, jungle and

prairies, that I have learnt to love and that call me back with a strange enchantment—an enchantment which I hardly understand myself, but which makes the blood run quicker at the memory of your virgin charm and beauty. Farewell, glorious life of the wilds! When shall I know you again?

CHAPTER XII

SINGAPORE—PENANG—RANGOON

Two days later, after a rather troublesome voyage on a poor French boat with good cooking, we arrived at Singapore.

Hardly had the anchor touched the bottom before the steamer was surrounded by a swarm of little naked Malay boys in primitive dug-out canoes, who endeavoured by cries and gestures to call the passengers' attention to their skill in diving after silver coins. At this sport they are phenomenally expert, and very seldom indeed does a coin reach the bottom. But then they live all day long in the water, which of course is very warm here, but nevertheless presents certain dangers in the shape of sharks and water-snakes, though these do not appear to concern the little amphibious people in the least. Their canoes roll over or fill with water just as often as they lie on an even keel; there are no balers, of course; but the craft is emptied simply by kicking the water over the gunwale.

Singapore gives one the impression of a really big city. Palatial blocks of modern buildings are

seen everywhere, and broad streets and avenues cross the town in all directions, with a crowded traffic of rickshaws and motor-cars. Here one has samples of every race the Orient can show, and the motley colours of their varied costumes give increased life to the picture. When, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the English established themselves at the southern point of the Malay Peninsula, they found there nothing but jungle. But, thanks to the energetic work of Sir Stamford Raffles, Singapore gradually grew both in size and importance, till the town is now one of the largest on the whole southern coast of Asia, and certainly holds the first place as a business centre. This explains the mixture of every possible element in the population ; it is said that over forty different races are to be found on this little piece of the earth's surface.

A pleasant contrast to the noisy life of the business quarter round the harbour is presented by the English part of the town, situated higher up the slopes. Here quiet roads wind between evergreen tropical gardens, where white bungalows gleam in the shade of the trees. The lawns are as green and well-kept as those of an English country-house, and were it not for the oppressive heat and intense sunlight one might almost imagine oneself transported to the soil of old Albion.

In this part of Singapore may also be found the famous Botanical Gardens, which, with their

magnificent beds, their gorgeous wealth of colour, and their perfume-drenched orchid-house, seem like a recovered Eden. Attached to the gardens is a model rubber plantation, owned by the State. The trees are tapped every other day, and from the spiral-shaped cuts in the bark the white, milky juice drops into small china cups. The flow lasts for about ten minutes, which just fills the cup to the brim. The sap is then poured into large troughs. A few drops of vinegar are added to bind it, and after from one to two days it becomes an immensely tough, doughy mass, strongly resembling sour milk in appearance. After this a long drying and rolling process takes place, and finally the mass is smoked and then put on the market in cakes of different weights.

Otherwise Singapore offers little of interest, and after taking a drive up North Bridge Street, famed for its numerous Chinese pawnshops (which, however, cannot be compared with the quaint and well-stuffed dens of Bangkok), one has seen pretty nearly all there is to see.

One day an excursion was made to the little Sultanate of Johore, which still possesses a certain degree of independence, though under the powerful protectorate of England. The road thither runs all the way through rubber and pine-apple plantations, of which the whole island seems full (Singapore, it will be remembered, lies on an island). On arriving at the narrow strait which separates

the island from the mainland, the view suddenly opens out, and from the top of some low hills we look out over a blue belt of water, on the opposite shore of which rise the white walls of the little town of Johore, embedded in luxuriant verdure. The blue outlines of the mountains of the Malay Peninsula form the background of this beautiful picture.

The palace, situated a stone's throw from the town itself, contains a "treasure chamber," which is shown to the visitor with pride, but the contents of which chiefly consist of rubbish, mixed with a few really fine and valuable old examples of the smith's art. The rest of the house is composed of a number of dark rooms, furnished in the shocking taste of the seventies, where moth and mildew have left visible traces of their depredations. But its surroundings are beautiful, and the gardens are extremely well kept. Their specialities are orchids and the "traveller's palm," which latter with its flattened mode of growth looks very like enormous fans. The name is derived from the joy all travellers in warm climates are said to feel at the sight of these palms, as the lower part of the thick stem always contains a large quantity of stored rain-water.

Our stay at Singapore only lasted a few days, and we left the port at the first opportunity on an excellent English steamer, which was to take us to Calcutta *via* Rangoon.

This was one of the most glorious voyages I have ever made. The sea was calm and bright as a mirror the whole time, but its monotony was broken by grotesquely formed islands and rocks. They lay like huge stones thrown there in sport by some giant's hand, with the turquoise-blue water lapping their sides, usually without a tree or a human habitation on their warm brown slopes.

A short call was made at Penang, or Pulo, on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula. Here palms are cultivated on a large scale, especially the areca and coco-nut palms, which occur in enormous quantities; from the former the very name of the town is derived (*pinang* is a Malay word for areca). To obtain cheap labour on the big coco-nut plantations the natives make use of specially trained monkeys, which climb up the trees and throw down the ripe fruit—truly a practical and economical arrangement!

We took a rickshaw and drove through the town to the Chinese temple, situated on the slope of a hill facing the sea. The yellow race makes fresh conquests daily in the East, and at Penang especially a large number of rich business-men have settled. Their palatial villas line the best streets, and out here, on a verdant hill, they have erected a temple, which with its magnificent terraces and gardens has certainly cost hundreds of thousands. It consists properly speaking of a conglomeration of small temples, each containing

its particular idol. On the lowest terrace is an artificial pond, in which hundreds of turtles lead an indolent existence. They have, however, a very important mission to fulfil, as the penitent Chinaman has only to make a chalk cross on one of their round backs and his sins are instantly transferred to the animal. Many of them were quite covered with these marks, and surely it would require the phlegmatic character of a turtle to bear with equanimity the discarded burden of half a dozen Chinamen's sins. A benevolent old priest showed us round and pressed us to buy squibs and rockets to stir up the gods with; for it appears they are particularly fond of noise. The visit was concluded by his offering tea and at the same time taking care to put a subscription list under the noses of his guests and make a collection for the upkeep of the temple.

On the morning of the fifth day the s.s. *Ellora* steamed into the muddy mouth of the Rangoon River, and shortly afterwards stuck fast on one of the many shifting sandbanks that occur just inside the entrance. The mishap, however, was taken with the greatest calmness, and when in a few hours the water rose, we floated off. The nearer one approaches the capital of Burma, the more thickly are the banks covered with all kinds of rice-mills, saw-mills and timber-yards, so that when the boat is finally moored to a buoy at the confluence of the Rangoon and Pegu rivers, one looks

about doubtfully for the town itself, which from here is almost hidden. But the golden pagoda spire of Shwe Dagon forms a good guide, dominating everything else with its mighty mass. Following this, we went ashore, and were soon taken charge of in the kindest way by Sir Harvey and Lady Adamson, the British Governor of Burma and his wife, whose guests we were during our short stay.

If I wanted a fitting epithet for Rangoon—or the whole country, for that matter—I could not find a better one than “rich in colour,” for it would be hard to find more gorgeous colouring anywhere. It is not only the smiling landscape with its luxuriant vegetation or the many temples with their gilded pagodas and richly carved façades that catch the eye, but above all the way in which the people themselves understand the art of dress, and the cheerful, friendly faces that beam upon one everywhere. I do not believe there is a single individual, not even a beggar, who does not manage somehow to drape a showy piece of stuff round his head or his loins, and as to the more prosperous section of the population, they simply gleam with the brightest colours in all possible and impossible combinations. Here can be seen yellow and green, red and blue, rose and violet, flaunting in the most fantastic way, but always with a certain touch of inborn taste and elegance. And what would often have an atrocious effect against the fair skin of a European, appears

quite natural and in its right place when framing a shapely, light-brown Burmese figure. The dress of men and women is almost the same: a piece of bright silk twisted round the waist, and with it a white open jacket. The men also wear round their heads a thin silk handkerchief, one end of which falls coquettishly on the shoulder. The women as a rule have no covering for the head, and pay all the more attention to an irreproachable coiffure: their hair shines with perfumed oils and fresh flowers. As a protection from the sun they usually carry big parasols, painted in cheerful colours.

One has the impression that the whole Burmese nation is composed of careless grown-up children, who take life as it comes and acknowledge no other guide than pleasure. But then it cannot be said that they make any excessive claims. A little rice, a silk shawl, and an occasional lotus cigar—that is all they ask of the good things of this life. Cigars especially rank high among their necessities, alike for men, women, and children, who begin to smoke almost as soon as they have learnt to walk. One of these cigars, which measure from six to eight inches in length, usually lasts an immense time, as a Burmese never puffs continuously at his weed, but just takes a few long pulls now and then, after which he sticks it behind his ear like a pen, where it stays till he feels inclined to smoke again. They love gay festivals

and frolics, and the national dance, *pwe*, is an eminently popular enjoyment. It makes its appearance on all solemn occasions, no matter whether these are connected with births, marriages, or funerals, but I am sorry to say that I never had the chance of seeing it performed.

Fifty years ago Rangoon was nothing but an unimportant little fishing village, but it is now a well-laid-out town with broad streets and shady avenues. Everywhere the quaint Burmese carriages are to be seen, consisting of a square box on two horribly creaking wheels, which hardly deserve the name, since they appear to be rather square than round. It is jocularly asserted that one can recognise one's friends and acquaintances by their creaking. The chief object of interest to the foreign visitor, however, is the great Shwe Dagon, or Golden Pagoda.

Its history extends far into the mists of antiquity, and it is said to have existed even 2300 years before Christ. The legend further relates that before his death Buddha delivered eight of his hairs to two merchants, on condition that the hairs were to be buried together with three relics which had belonged to Buddha's three mystic predecessors—Kakusanda, Konagamma, and Kadyapa. By a lucky chance the two merchants were able to find the staff of the first, the bowl of the second and the kerchief of the third, and over these objects and the sacred hairs Shwe Dagon was

erected. The present building, which may be about one hundred and fifty years old, is situated on the top of a steep mound, and the material for this artificial foundation was obtained at some time from the site of the great ponds, which now give the public park its chief charm and refreshing coolness. The entrance is guarded by two colossal "leogryphs," 'a sort of monster resulting from a cross between a dragon and a lion, set there to protect the sanctuary with their grinning faces against evil spirits. For the Shwe Dagon is regarded as one of the most sacred temples of Buddhism, and countless are the pilgrims who come annually from China, Japan, Siam, Tibet, and India to lay their offerings at the foot of "The Enlightened."

Broad flights of steps, slippery with spilt wax from the votive candles of the faithful and covered with a richly carved and painted roof of teak, lead up the steep incline. On each side is a multitude of little shops and booths, where candles, flowers, temple-gongs, religious pictures and censers may be had for a small sum. But the article most in demand is gold-leaf, with which to gild one of the many images or the pagoda itself. This is regarded as a most effectual means of acquiring merit in the earthly life, which in a future state will curtail the soul's migration to the distant goal of Nirvana. Formerly these salesmen belonged to a special caste, that of the temple slaves, who from



THE TOP OF SCHWE DAGON.

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generation to generation were inseparably bound to the sanctuary to which they belonged. From this there was no means of escape: if the parents were slaves, this social position was inevitably inherited by their children, who could not buy their freedom even with gold. Whether this degrading state of things still exists in an otherwise very democratic and free country, I have no certain knowledge, but probably it persists, though not in so rigorous a form. Its origin is said to have been a progress made by one of the more eminent of the kings of the country through his provinces, with the object of becoming better acquainted with his people. In the course of his journey his kind heart was moved at seeing the monks themselves perform all the rough work in the monasteries and temples, and in order to save them this trouble he sent his own servants to the holy men to remove the hardest work from their shoulders. From this act, which was thus merely a sign of benevolence, a highly developed system of slavery gradually arose. It frequently happened, too, that Burmese princes simply made prisoners of their opponents at home or abroad, and then presented them in perpetuity to the temples.

After considerable pushing and elbowing through the crowd of visitors who always form a continual stream on the steps, one finally arrives at the highest terrace. Here the vast gilt pagoda rises in all its majesty, its top crowned by a great

Ti or parasol of pure gold, inlaid with precious stones and hung with little tinkling bells that are set in motion by the light currents of air. The gigantic building towers to a height of nearly 400 feet, and it is said that no one has yet reached the top of it since the work was completed. The one who came nearest to accomplishing this feat was a tiger, which was discovered some years ago within the temple precincts and in its terror took to flight up the smooth sides of the pagoda, from whence it was shot down by a company of soldiers. A large tiger in painted plaster at the foot of the walls perpetuates the memory of this strange occurrence.

On the great paved terrace that extends all round the base of the Shwe Dagon is an immense number of small pagodas and temples, called *Tazaungs*, each containing one or more standing, sitting, lying, meditating, world-renouncing, and preaching Buddhas, some in gold and precious metals, others carved from a single piece of transparent rock-crystal, but the greater number made of terra-cotta covered with painted cement. These *Tazaungs* may either be gilt from top to bottom, or—if their material is wood—richly carved with pictures from the legend of Buddha. Everywhere lofty poles are to be seen, hung with all kinds of streamers and garlands of flowers, and looking not unlike a Swedish maypole. The streamers on these *Tayundaings* are inscribed all over with

prayers, which are borne by the wind to the higher powers. Booths with yelling salesmen are on every side, and in one corner of the terrace is a small enclosure, in which a solitary white and very holy elephant drags out its days in enforced idleness. There was quite a little town here, with a hundred holes and corners among the temples, pagodas and other buildings, forming to the uninitiated a somewhat intricate labyrinth, the mazes of which constantly offered fresh surprises and picturesque scenes.

But what a motley life there was up here ! The gay costumes of the Burmese shone like many-coloured flowers and formed a sharp contrast to the less conspicuous figures of Chinese and Tibetans, which were marked by a certain gloomy reserve. The greater number knelt before one or other of the shrines, alternately mumbling long prayers with the forehead resting on the pavement and taking a few pulls at the inevitable cigar, placed on the ground within convenient reach. But they all looked equally devout, all seemed to perform their devotions with unswerving faith and burning piety, without allowing themselves to be disturbed by the loud cries of the salesmen or the never-failing garrulity of the soothsayers, offering to cast the visitor's horoscope for half a rupee. Silent as shadows the orange-robed priests and monks glided through the crowd or received offerings, which they then set up before one of the idols, whose abode

often enough presented the appearance of a general shop from the quantity of heterogeneous objects that were thus stacked up round the altar—flowers, candles, fruit, lamps, bowls, pieces of stuff, plaits of hair, combs, etc. etc. A frightful old nun, draped in a white shawl, wandered about like a ghost, begging. Her features were so ravaged by time that she looked more like a mummy than a living creature; her head was bald, but for some reason she had taken to growing a beard instead, and long tufts of hair hung from her ears. Her voice was hoarse and rough, and from the corner of her mouth dangled a huge cigar, which stuck there firmly, no matter whether she was saying prayers or stretching out a hand like a skeleton's for alms. If I had not seen other proofs of her femininity, I should frankly have been in doubt as to her actual sex, for anything more unwomanly it would be difficult to find.

From one of the smallest booths peals of happy laughter rang out in unbroken succession. A naked woman was lying on her stomach over a bench, and on her back a pretty little girl of seven or eight was performing a most ferocious war-dance, jumping and kicking with her little feet on the living platform. Both were in fits of laughter, and seemed to be equally amused by their queer occupation. Questioned as to its object, the woman replied between two bursts of laughter that her digestion had gone wrong and that nothing was so good for

it as massage—it was already much better and would soon be all right, if only the youngster could keep it up long enough.

Unfortunately, our stay in picturesque Rangoon was limited to two days—India was waiting, and we had already been delayed a couple of weeks, otherwise Burma would have been worth a far longer visit. Above all, the trip by river up the Irrawaddy to Mandalay and then on into the Shan States is said to be one of the most magnificent of its kind, but there could be no question of it for us. Before leaving, we visited one of the great timber-yards of the British Teak-wood Company, situated on the very bank of the river. Teak is one of the most important items in the country's export trade, and immense quantities of it still remain untouched in the great forests of the interior. From there the trunks are floated down the rivers and fished up by the great timber-yards of Rangoon, from which they are then shipped. In no other country are elephants used to such an extent for performing work as in this very Burmese teak industry. As soon as the tree has been felled and lopped of its branches, it is taken charge of by an elephant, who drags the trunk to the nearest watercourse and pushes it into the stream. Then the timber looks after itself till it comes to Rangoon, where it is fished up again by elephants, sorted and laid in immense piles. The intelligence possessed by these animals is altogether admirable. They raise

the heavy trunks on their strong tusks, balance themselves on the top of perpendicular piles of timber, and deposit their burden exactly in the place pointed out to them. But this is not all. Should the end of the trunk project too far beyond the side of the pile, they go up and give it a shove with their forehead, so that it lies flush with the rest. They can also roll the trees before them on the ground, using their trunks and tusks ; if another tree happens to lie in the way, they just give it a powerful kick with their huge foot, which makes it roll far to one side. And this simply at a word of command from the mahout, who only exceptionally has recourse to his pointed *ankus*. The value of one of these animals is generally estimated at from £400 to £750, depending on age and training, and the latter takes at least four years. The tree-trunks often weigh over half a ton.

And then we were back on the deck of the English steamer, steering through the northern part of the Bay of Bengal. The water was at first so clear that we could quite well see the flying-fish for a moment before they began their silvery leap through the air ; and at night the phosphorescence gleamed like myriads of diamonds, lighting up the wake of the vessel like a maritime Milky Way. But the nearer we approached the Indian continent, the muddier the sea became from all the silt of the great rivers that here have their outlet, so that when two days later we anchored off the delta of



IN THE TIMBER YARDS OF RANGOON.

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the Ganges, the water was more like gruel than anything else. Here the pilots came on board; the best-paid pilots in the world, on account of the difficult navigation among the sandbanks of the Hoogly.

With a strong tide and making twenty knots over the ground, we danced away through the narrow channels, while the river banks with their dense jungle passed us as in a kaleidoscope. When night came on we anchored, as all navigation is prohibited after dark, but the following forenoon saw us already moored to the broad passenger-quay in the port of Calcutta.

It is far from my intention in the following chapters to attempt to describe India or give an account of the many different races, religions, and castes with which that great country swarms. For information on these interesting subjects I am obliged to refer the reader to the abundant special literature which is at the disposal of the student of India. I only propose to tell of my own experiences during the journey, and especially those among them which perhaps do not always fall to the lot of an ordinary tourist.

CHAPTER XIII

CALCUTTA

To any one coming direct from Rangoon to Calcutta, the latter place appears at first sight rather gloomy and stern. No cheerful looks brighten the regular features of the thoughtful Indians, and the wealth of colour that is everywhere prevalent in Burma and that one is inclined to look for in the peninsula of Nearer India as well, is almost entirely absent. Here, with very few exceptions, everybody is dressed in white, and the only splash of colour that now and then catches the eye of the stranger is a red scarf or a gold-embroidered turban. All the more solemn on these puckered brows is the grimace of the many fantastic caste-marks, often painted in the form of a white circle, which is certainly said to protect its wearer from evil spirits, but at the same time makes him look as if he went about with the "evil eye" on his forehead. The caste system is said to be originally due to the Aryan lawgiver Manu, who about 600 B.C. introduced a very strict division of classes, intended to prevent the mixture of the proud Aryan race with inferior native elements. At

first there were only four castes : Brahmans (priests), who had proceeded from the mouth of the god Brahma ; *kshattriyas* (warriors), from his arms ; *vaisyas* (merchants), who came from his belly ; and *sudras* (slaves), from his feet. But in course of time these castes have been further subdivided, so that at present there are certainly a thousand of them to be found spread over the whole of India, the members of which are scrupulously careful to avoid the slightest contact with outsiders. Indeed, this distinction of caste is carried so far that if the mere shadow of an inferior individual falls upon an orthodox member of a higher caste, the latter immediately feels polluted and must dip in the waters of the Ganges to wash away the disgrace. This excessive sensitiveness leads to a good deal of trouble even in European households, since the servant who, for instance, does the rooms, cannot possibly touch a dish of vegetables, still less a piece of meat. The reason for this special contempt for meat is to be found in the circumstance that cows, dogs, monkeys, and peacocks are regarded by many as sacred, and contact with the carcass of such an animal is considered to involve loss of caste.

One of our first proceedings was to procure two Indian servants, who in spite of the caste system would be willing to do a little of everything. For in India it is difficult for a tourist to get on by himself, as the language places insuperable

obstacles in his way, and it is therefore necessary to have one or two dusky persons with one, who look after the luggage, dispute with the porters, and between whiles cheat their temporary masters more or less openly. Through the medium of Cook's two individuals soon made their appearance, both equally bandy-legged, and equally loud in their protestations that better servants, guides, hunters, and couriers were not to be had for money in the whole Indian Empire. They declared that they wanted neither food nor lodging, since they would themselves procure the former through "friends" in the kitchen ; and as for night quarters, there was always plenty of room on the floor of the long hotel corridors. And so it was that a little later the bearded Râmzân and the swarthy Moghál followed us out of Cook's office on the way to the somewhat shabby Grand Hotel Calcutta, each with a minute bundle under his arm, hardly big enough to accommodate an ordinary tooth-brush. However, during the subsequent course of the trip our new slaves proved to be quite reliable and rendered us a great many invaluable services.

Calcutta is a fairly dull, ugly, and uninteresting town, and the week we spent there was occupied almost exclusively in preparations for the forthcoming dash through Northern India. These preparations consisted, amongst other things, in procuring bedding, as the Indian railway carriages

are entirely lacking in everything that pertains to an ordinary sleeping-car, such as blankets, mattresses, pillows, sheets, etc., all of which the traveller is expected to bring with him. The only thing provided is a hard, leather-covered couch, which besides a layer of dust half an inch thick usually harbours a number of other less welcome bedfellows.

The sights of the town are really limited to the very well-arranged Zoological Garden and a few small temples in the suburb of Kalighat, where once a week great sacrifices of chickens are made to the bloodthirsty goddess Kali. Formerly her idol had to be smeared every day with fresh human blood, but since the English came into power she has had to be satisfied with ordinary lamb or chickens.

But there were two events during our stay in Calcutta which left nothing to be desired in charm and interest, and before I proceed with the story of our travels I will briefly mention these.

In a little annexe of the great Imperial Museum the city's technical school is housed. Narrow steps lead up to it, and seldom or never does the tourist set his dusty foot within the low and unpretentious rooms, in which a number of brown-skinned youths take their first faltering steps on the thorny paths of art. And in fact it was by pure chance—thanks to a compatriot living on the spot—that we found the school in question and made the acquaintance of its sympathetic and highly gifted native principal,

whose name is Tagore. Himself an artist, he is the founder of the school as well as the force that keeps it going and holds it together, and his chief object is the revival of the old Indian art of painting, as it has been preserved for centuries on yellowed sheets but in colours that are still fresh. And it was a real pleasure to examine under his guidance some of the varied collections both of the school and of the museum.

Evidently encouraged by the interest we showed, he invited us at parting to visit his house in the evening, to inspect his art treasures, and to spend a quiet "Indian evening."

It was as dark as the grave when later in the day, after wandering aimlessly among winding streets in a car whose chauffeur did not understand a word of English, we finally arrived at a wide doorway, the substantial dimensions of which clearly proclaimed that the inmates valued an undisturbed night's rest. A moment later the heavy hinges creaked and three figures appeared, all enveloped in long white togas, with bare legs and sandals on their feet. By the flickering light of an oil-lamp one could almost imagine that a Cæsar or an Augustus stood before one, and my thoughts involuntarily flew to the marble statues of Roman emperors. A big bolt was carefully shot behind us, and, preceded by the three brothers Tagore, we went up a broad staircase and found ourselves in a large, light and airy room, where

our hosts bade us welcome with true Oriental hospitality.

The floor was covered with a thick carpet, upon which a pale blue silken cloth had been spread, together with a number of cushions large and small. In the middle were three old stringed instruments, and books and rolls of parchment lay scattered everywhere. The rest of the furniture consisted of comfortable sofas, and round the four walls ran long rows of low bookshelves—a rich and varied library, which, we were told, contained over 20,000 volumes. The walls were hung with old Indian paintings, and here and there antique bronzes gleamed from niches and window recesses.

This, then, was the centre of the Tagores' home, where the talented family spent their leisure hours in art studies and music. This ancient house, which traces its lineage back to a dim antiquity, has always occupied a pre-eminent place among the native element of Calcutta. There are now four brothers living, of whom two are distinguished artists, one a jurist, and one—the youngest—the family librarian. He happened to be away.

Our three hosts were untiring in showing us their collections, every object of which had its own special history; and their eyes regularly glowed with enthusiasm when they spoke of any really good "find" they had made.

After a while tea-cups and cigarettes made their appearance, and we seated ourselves on the soft divans. At the same time a musician came in, sat down on the floor without a word, took up one of the instruments lying there—a *shubahar*—and began to play. Like the whisperings of a spirit the notes came softly, plaintively and sadly from the old instrument, which with each fresh chord seemed to awaken more and more from its long slumber. It was as though the light touch of the artist's fingers were able to instil new life into its soul, whose harmonies—saturated with the mysticism and poetry of ancient India—now vibrated in our ears. But through them all ran a peculiar undercurrent of deep melancholy—the sigh of a people, now in bondage, but which not long ago had been master of the East. An indescribable charm dwelt in the simple melody, and long after the last notes of the “Midnight Song” had died away, I seemed to hear the silver strings still echoing with the old song of Khan Zada :

“You are my God, and I would fain adore You
With sweet and secret rites of other days,
Burn scented oil in silver lamps before You,
Pour perfume on Your feet with prayer and praise.”¹

Seldom or never have I been present at a moment so instinct with feeling ; it actually brought tears to one's eyes, and one scarcely

¹ Laurence Hope, *The Garden of Kama* (London : Wm. Heinemann).

dared to breathe for fear of breaking the spell. Equally beautiful was a "Morning Song" (each time of the day has its own melody); and when the music had ended with a "Spring Song," it was unfortunately time to say good-bye to our congenial hosts. But it will be long before I forget that impressive evening, and even to-day, as I write these lines, I can hear the silver strings of the old *shubahar* ringing in my ears.

The other event was considerably more prosaic, but nevertheless offered much that was interesting to the eyes of an Occidental unaccustomed to such spectacles. For it was an Indian wedding.

In company with the Vicereine, Lady Hardinge, we proceeded one afternoon to the luxurious house of the Maharani of Cooch Behar, situated in one of the best quarters of Calcutta and surrounded by a large garden. It was her daughter, the Princess Pretiva of Cooch Behar, who was to be married to a young Englishman, who—to the great scandal of many of his countrymen—had gone over to his bride's religion. This faith is said to be an invention of the present Maharaja's grandfather and to resemble Christianity in many ways.

On our arrival we were received by the young and friendly ruler of Cooch Behar, who scarcely a year before had succeeded his father on the latter's decease, and now reigned over the little

principality. He was a slight, well-proportioned man of a little over thirty, with delicate features and something of the dignity of the born Oriental ruler in his whole manner. The picturesque native dress suited him to perfection: a loosely fitting, gold-embroidered tunic and a white robe draped in artistic folds over the legs. Little did I guess at this, our first meeting, that exactly a week later I should again be his guest, though this time in the middle of the wilderness, roaming through endless jungles in the eager search for tracks of tiger.

On the first floor, where the old Maharaja's widow was doing the honours with exquisite kindness and making the final preparations for her daughter's marriage, were assembled some fifty invited guests, including the leaders of Calcutta society, both native and European. After a number of introductions had been gone through, we settled ourselves in comfortable chairs, which had been arranged in long rows in the large drawing-room, and the ceremony began.

One end of the room was occupied by a low, square platform, entirely covered with red cloths, cushions and embroideries, over which pink and white flowers had been strewn with lavish hands. In the centre sat a wrinkled old priest, presumably the Court chaplain, enveloped in a long, pale-yellow robe, which closely resembled



THE MAHARAJAH OF COOCH BEHAR.

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TO WHOM
IT MAY COME

crinkled tissue-paper. To the right of him, on a little red cushion, the bridegroom was posted ; he was a tall and fair young Englishman, whose nationality no one could possibly mistake, dressed in the same kind of Oriental costume as his future brother-in-law wore, which curiously enough did not suit him at all badly. Immediately opposite sat the bride, with her brother, the Maharaja, at her side. Her bright red dress, richly embroidered with gold, fell in soft folds over her slender figure, and her head was well enveloped in a costly *sahri* of the same material. Only now and then could one catch a glimpse of her features, which seemed to belong to an unusually handsome woman. Framing these chief personages stood or sat the bride's nearest relatives, among whom her younger sister in particular attracted the attention of all by her perfect Oriental beauty. Her delicately chiselled features formed a worthy frame to the large eyes, black as night, whose bottomless depths no European can ever yet have been able to fathom. A broad band of gold encircled the dark hair, and from the ears hung heavy gold rings. She was a genuine Salome type, radiant with freshness and charm, with the full, warm blood and glowing passion of the East in her veins, adorned with dreamy mysticism, reserved in her nature.

The wedding ceremony itself consisted in

great measure in one party presenting gifts to the other, while promises, questions and answers were exchanged between the contracting parties and the priest. It was held partly in English, partly in Bengali, interspersed now and then with monotonous hymns, executed on the organ by a bald-headed priest. Undoubtedly the prettiest intermezzo in the short scene was that where bride and bridegroom gave each other their hands and the Court chaplain wound round them a garland of fresh flowers into an elaborate lovers' knot, symbolising the union between husband and wife. At the same time the marriage promises were pronounced, concluding with the following mutual prayer: "Be thou my friend, may I be thy friend; may our friendship never be dissolved!" And thus another bond had been formed between East and West.

CHAPTER XIV

SPORT IN COOCH BEHAR

A FEW days after the wedding just described I met the Maharaja of Cooch Behar for the second time at a dinner given by India's far-famed "lady shikari," Lady J., of whom it is said that she handles the fan in a drawing-room with as much skill and grace as a rifle in the jungle, and that the tigers that have fallen to her sure aim have reached double figures. And it was thanks in great measure to her friendship with the Maharaja that shortly afterwards I found myself in a noisy and shaky train on my way northward to his little principality for a few days' tiger-shooting.

The journey took sixteen hours, and during that time I had ample opportunity of becoming acquainted with Indian railway carriages, which are unusually wretched and uncomfortable. There is no corridor either from one carriage to another or between the different compartments, and where you have once taken your seat you have to sit until the train is pleased to stop. The fittings consist of nothing but two hard, though broad couches along the outer sides, and—as already

mentioned—every kind of sleeping-car comfort is banned. The traveller himself has to manage that as best he can. On the other hand, there are usually one or two electric fans in the roof, which during the daytime provide a dusty coolness. In a corner there is often a rusty old wash-stand, and if you have luck you may sometimes find water there—but this is distinctly the exception, which is therefore greeted with all the more joy. The thing that is not stinted is floor-space, and provided the door is wide enough, you can very well travel with one or two moderate-sized trunks in the carriage. Delays are almost as common as in Italy, but here they are of little account, as the Oriental has no real idea of time, but resignedly follows the old motto "*Festina lente.*"

In the evening we ferried across the sacred river Ganges, over which a great railway bridge was in construction, to avoid the troublesome changes ; and on the farther side another line took us up, with a rather narrower gauge but a good deal more shaking, on which Lewenhaupt and I tried in vain to get any real night's rest.

In the morning, when we had crossed the border, our royal host was pleased to climb in person on to the locomotive and to drive the long train with his own gloved hands. This is one of the little personal pleasures that no one has the heart to deny him, especially as, according to the statement of the English engine-driver, he performs

the duty in an irreproachable way. Just after I had got into my carriage a message came with an invitation to mount the engine, and so at the first stop I made my way to it, and luckily arrived just as the train was starting. But at the last station before arriving, when I was going back to my carriage to remove some of the dust and dirt from my clothes, my dash was not equally successful, as the train was a long one, and when I had got half-way the Maharaja took it into his head to start the engine, which forced me to jump up on to the step of the nearest carriage. But, as luck would have it, this was the mail van, and as there happened to be nobody in it and the door was locked, the result was that I made my entry into the capital standing on the step and, so to speak, hovering between heaven and earth, to the great astonishment of the assembled congregation, who—very naturally, I admit—could not exactly make out what business I had to be there.

Cooch Behar itself, lying in the middle of the little principality of the same name in the north-eastern corner of Bengal and just on the border of Assam, is really a very large village, with a population of only two or three thousand. Besides a palace, outwardly magnificent but inwardly rather badly damaged by an earthquake, the place has no sights to boast of. But then I had not come there for sight-seeing, but for a far more exciting

and—in my eyes, at least—considerably more interesting business. For it was here that the mysteries of the Indian jungle were to be disclosed to my eyes for the first time, and the veil that surrounds the impenetrable thickets was to be torn aside by the powerful tusks of trumpeting elephants.

We stayed two days in the town, waiting till all the arrangements of the camp were completed. Meanwhile a few small shoots took place in the immediate neighbourhood, at which a number of wild pigs, civet cats, and other small game were killed—all from the backs of elephants. Then at last, on the morning of the third day, we started by motor-car along a rutted and uneven road for the camp. This road went across a plain, where hundreds of lean kine were trying to get as much nourishment as possible out of their equally lean pasture. Here and there a group of vultures could be seen, making their dinner off some old carcass. Cows and oxen are of course sacred beasts to the Hindu, so that when one of them dies the flesh is never used, but the carcass is left where it fell to be dealt with by Nature's own scavengers. Three ferries were successfully crossed on temporary bamboo rafts, and by degrees the open country began to give place to jungle and high elephant-grass.

After a two hours' drive, we reached the boundary of the hunting-grounds forbidden to

ordinary mortals, and soon after the car drove up a broad street of tents, with magnificent canvas dwellings on each side. Each of us had one to himself, containing besides writing-room and bedroom a little bathroom at the back. Lewenhaupt had the tent alongside mine, and then on each side of us were our host and seven or eight gentlemen of his Court. At the end nearest the street stood two larger tents, one arranged as a dining-room capable of holding at least forty guests, and the other fitted up as a luxurious smoking-room, with a good-sized French billiard-table as well. Behind these were about fifty tents for cooks and servants (two hundred or so in number), and still farther off a large open space, where the elephants were picketed. All these tents were pitched on the bank of a little river, which with its crystal-clear waters from the slopes of the Himalaya wound through the jungle. Now it should be observed that from the very first I had begged my host not to put himself to any great trouble for my sake in the way of lodging and so on, as both Lewenhaupt and I were used to camping in the open air. When I pointed this out to him, he only gave a broad smile, and said that what I saw was only regarded as a very small camp, and that it had been no trouble at all to those concerned to put it up in the short space of two days. Such is the Oriental way of looking at things!

Here I spent a few pleasant and memorable

days in roaming on the back of an elephant through the otherwise impassable jungle, and in the evenings enjoying a cheerful and unconstrained camp-life. One of these days I shall try to describe here ; but, before I go farther, perhaps a few words about the methods of big-game shooting may not be out of place.

All shooting is done with and from elephants. It may here be pointed out once for all that no other way is possible, as the elephant is the only animal under man's control that can force its way through the dense thickets of the jungle, or the rough, almost impenetrable elephant-grass. To go on foot over this ground, where one would have to cut one's way step by step, is unthinkable, besides being attended by great risks. There is therefore no other alternative than the back of an elephant, and it is on these animals—just as much as on the skill of the sportsmen—that the successful result of a day's shooting depends. The animals are extraordinarily well trained, and it is a real pleasure to see them at work under the guidance of their mahouts.

There were about thirty of these monsters in the present Maharaja's elephant-stable, or *pil-khana*, as it is here called. They are divided into two groups :—

(1) Howdah elephants, saddled with the large and heavy howdahs, with room for one other person besides the sportsman, if required. For this purpose

the largest, strongest, and best-trained animals are usually chosen, and preferably "tuskers." They ought to be so well trained that, even if attacked by a tiger or other big game, they will take no notice but stand as firm as a rock. It occasionally happens that at the critical moment they bolt or themselves attack the enemy, but such things are said to be very exceptional.

(2) Pad elephants, or the rest of the *pilkhana*. These, which besides the mahout only carry a broad, stuffed pad on their backs, are generally younger, and sometimes quite untrained animals, which are used as beaters in the line. On account of their lighter load they are able to move more easily and rapidly, and are therefore often used for riding when a long distance has to be covered.

The elephants are distributed in such a way that the ground where the game is expected is surrounded by the "pads," which then beat the jungle in the direction of the "howdahs," posted in a convenient open space on the edge of the ground in question.

But how is the game to be located?

Buffalo, bison and rhinoceros are usually fairly stationary, so that information about their haunts may be had from the native shikaris.

Not so with tiger or leopard, which between sunset and morning roam through the jungle in all directions, often covering a distance of 20 or

25 miles, without having any fixed lair. In hunting these animals one has first to await "khubber." This means that news has come in of an animal—usually an ox, cow, or calf—having been killed by a tiger or leopard in the course of the night and dragged into the jungle. If there is water in the neighbourhood, you may be sure that, after satisfying his immediate hunger—always beginning with the hindquarters—and quenching his thirst at the water close by, the beast of prey will lie down to sleep in the immediate neighbourhood of his kill and stay there during the hottest hours of the day. On the other hand, if there is no water, he will go away after only drinking his victim's blood, and will not return.

By the size of the footprints it can usually be seen whether it is a tiger or a leopard that has been at work, though the tracks of a big leopard and a young tiger are not easily distinguished. Besides this, they kill their prey in different ways. A male tiger always springs on to the back of his prey and breaks its neck; a tigress always attacks from below and seizes it by the throat. The leopard kills in the same way as the male tiger, but as a rule only calves or small cows.

And now, dear reader and fellow-sportsman, follow me in your thoughts on the broad back of Hirām-Pershad through the mazy thickets of the

jungle, and I will try to give you a picture—though but a feeble one—of what is, in my opinion, the most magnificent sporting panorama to be seen in the whole world.

At nine in the morning two leopard khubbers had been brought to the camp; as they appeared to be good, it was decided to follow them up. Besides this, the natives had brought news that not far away a wild bull buffalo had come upon a herd of tame ones, driven off the herdsman and the tame bulls, and was now ruling with the autocratic right of the stronger over his new subjects. No wonder the natives were anxious to get him dispatched to happier hunting-grounds. Most of the pad elephants, together with the "howdahs," carrying rifles, cameras, etc., were sent in advance, and at ten o'clock six of the swifter pad elephants marched up and lay down with a sigh, while we climbed by the help of a ladder on to their broad backs, two on each. At a word from the mahout they got up again, and then we left the camp in single file, and soon came upon a broad trampled path leading through the long grass.

The landscape was flat, without hills or mountains; here and there it was traversed by clear, winding mountain streams, coming from the mighty range of the Himalaya. The plains with their high grass lay brown and monotonous; only now and then a wild cotton-tree gleamed like a

torch with its red flowers. Farther off the jungle could be seen with its luxuriant verdure and the fine network of the slender bamboo. The sun was already beginning to burn, and we went slowly forward in silence through the wilderness.

Soon the grass became thinner, and we came out on to an open plain, where tame herds were peacefully grazing; at the edge of the jungle stood some low bamboo huts, and a number of natives watched the advancing procession with inquisitive eyes. Then into thicker grass and jungle again, to come out once more on a smaller open space, bordered on one side by dense jungle and on the other by a narrow river.

Here the "howdahs" were waiting, and I climbed over to my comfortable seat on the back of the mighty Hirām-Pershad¹; behind me sat one of the Maharaja's secretaries, whose mangled English was rather difficult to understand but who was able to give me a good deal of useful information in the course of the day's shoot.

In the howdah I found, besides my own '475 express, a '450 and a '375 hammerless express besides a double-barrelled gun—an excellent Holland & Holland—so with that arsenal I could feel fairly safe and prepared for the worst.

It was the buffalo's turn first, and we started

¹ "The diamond-like."

in the direction of the river, where he had last been seen. Quite right ; about 500 yards in front of me was the tame herd, on the fine sand by the bank of the stream ; and after a while I caught sight of a huge dark mass, quite a head higher than the other animals, marching about with stately steps among the tame cattle and reviewing his terrified subjects. The intruder was easily distinguishable from the rest by his enormous, glossy black body, his broad neck, and his powerful horns.

Then followed an enveloping movement with all the elephants, and soon the whole herd, including the big bull, was surrounded. The latter began to show signs of uneasiness, pawing the sand and throwing his head about.

My elephant advanced obliquely towards the animal, and the distance between us grew less and less. Now I will admit that at that moment my feelings were far from pleasant. It was my first shot at big game in Cooch Behar, and I could feel the eyes of the other sportsmen acutely in the back of my neck ; if I missed, my moral condemnation would certainly be severe. And to put a bullet from the top of a never quite motionless howdah at fairly long range into the right spot on an animal surrounded and partially covered by tame cattle, did not appear to me a very inviting task. For how easy it was for one of the latter to come in the line of fire just at the critical

moment—and I should have disgraced myself for ever!

But all went well; the .475 bullet struck just behind the shoulder, and the animal showed that he had been shot in the way so characteristic of buffalo—back arched and head down between the forelegs. He ran a few steps, stopped, tore up a great cloud of dust with his forefeet, and glared angrily at my elephant. If he could have done so, he would certainly have charged at that moment; but he got another bullet and at the same time a couple more from Lewenhaupt, who had gradually ridden up from another direction, and this brought him to his knees. I rode up to the beast and gave him the finishing shot in the head at close range.

He turned out to be an old bull with a big body, but unfortunately very poor horns. As tenacious of life as all his race, he had required no less than six bullets to finish him.

We then rode back to the edge of the jungle, and the work of the forenoon was considered at an end. Two immense tiffin elephants, loaded with chairs, tables, and hampers containing everything imaginable in the way of eatables and drinkables, marched into the arena, and soon a dainty meal was served in the first shady place to be found. To say that we suffered starvation or any other hardship on these shoots would be grossly untrue.

The place where we were resting was quite close to one of the khubbers, and after tiffin an extremely lively and animated conversation took place among the native hunters as to how the next beat should be taken so as to get the leopard out at the right place. Each of them evidently had his own idea on the subject and considered his proposal to be the only one of any use. However, the dispute was settled very quickly by our host, who with genuine Oriental serenity told them to stop their noise and then decided the matter himself.

The howdah elephants came up, knelt down, and soon I was back in my seat, rocking to and fro in time with Hirām-Pershad's deliberate footsteps. My elephant stopped on a narrow forest path with the other howdahs on each side of him. To begin with all was silent and still, but soon the crash of the advancing line of beaters could be heard. Irresistible as an avalanche it pressed on through the dense jungle, the powerful animals forcing their way with the help of trunks and tusks. Trees and branches were broken and fell in all directions; I could already make out the head of one of the mahouts above the thick undergrowth; nearer and nearer came the line—and at last they reached us. Not a shot had been fired and no game had passed—with the exception of a couple of hares and a wild pig; the prey we had looked forward to

with such excitement had evidently scented danger and made off before our arrival. On my asking where he could have gone, I received the following encouraging reply from one of the shikaris: "He must have trotted off to Calcutta."

After this we made for the site of the other khubber, which lay on the opposite side of the river. The banks were fairly high and steep, and in order to preserve his dignity in going down them, Hirām-Pershad simply sat on his haunches and tobogganed. On reaching the water there was endless splashing and squirting with the trunk, a thing that these animals seem to be very fond of.

Arrived on the other side, I was soon at my post again, listening to the advancing beat.

Soon a loud trumpet signal was heard from one of the elephants, a sure sign that the game was "in." Nearer and nearer came the line, and suddenly I saw a glimpse of the leopard, which instantly disappeared again. The beat had now reached the edge of the jungle, and at the same time I had another sight of the animal, scared out of his wits and running the gauntlet under the noses of the elephants, in a vain attempt to find an opening through which he might break back again. He was met with cries and loud trumpeting, made up his mind and dashed at full speed for the wing where Lewenhaupt and I stood. As soon as he was clear of the other elephants, our



THE FIRST LEOPARD.



THE LINE OF ELEPHANTS.

[To face p. 266.]

70 1911
ABSTRACT

shots came almost simultaneously. The leopard, evidently badly wounded, began to twist like mad round the legs of Lewenhaupt's elephant, but calmed down after another shot from him and made off into the thick grass, where he evidently fell. I rode up to the approximate place, and then Hīrām-Pershad had to show what he was worth, as a wounded leopard is not to be trifled with. Encouraged by the cries of his mahout, with shrill trumpeting and with his trunk rolled up into a ball between his huge tusks, he reluctantly began to push aside the grass in the direction of the wounded animal with his forehead and forefeet. It was not long before I saw the leopard, which was lying between two big tufts and glaring at me with his fierce yellow cat's eyes. A shot from the '375 in the neck—and he lay still for ever. At the same moment thirty trunks went straight up into the air, and loud, if not melodious, fanfares from all the elephants proclaimed the joyful news far and wide. It was a grand and imposing spectacle, which I shall be slow to forget.

The leopard, which was found to be a handsomely marked male, measuring 7 feet $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches from his nose to the tip of his tail, was hoisted by a rope round his neck on to the back of a pad elephant, and then we started for home.

Then began the last phase of a day's sport in the jungle—the "general shoot." All the elephants

were formed into a long, straight line, in such a way that the howdahs were posted at regular intervals, with five or six pad elephants between. The word was passed: "Everything may be shot, from rhinoceros and tiger to hare and partridge." And so the long line moved off in the general direction of the camp.

I stood rifle in hand on my rolling platform and tried as well as I could to keep my balance. Soon I was in amongst the densest thickets, and then Hirām-Pershad had some hard work. It is perhaps on these occasions that the cleverness and wonderful training of the elephants is seen to the best advantage. Now it is a thick branch which stops the howdah. "Break," says the mahout, and the mighty trunk takes a half-turn round the branch, which is flung to the ground with a crash. If he should take hold of the wrong branch by mistake, he leaves go of it at once on being told by the mahout, and tries another until he finds the right one. Now it is a big tree that bars the way: Hirām-Pershad goes quietly up to it, puts his forehead to the trunk, breaking it like a match, and then bends the tree to the ground with one forefoot, to the right, left, or straight ahead, according to the order of the mahout.

Although I know that my neighbours on either side are only a few yards from me, the jungle is here so dense that I see nothing of them. And when I stand upright in the howdah, it is still about

6 feet to the top of the high grass. Only then does one fully realise man's powerlessness to penetrate this vegetation alone.

But by degrees it grows thinner. The twilight that prevailed is gradually dispersed, and then the whole line breaks out of the jungle almost at the same moment, and the great unbroken plain with its brown grass — here short — lies before us in imposing desolation. The tents of the camp show up on the horizon, and behind them the blood-red evening sun hangs upon the tree-tops, as though hesitating to say farewell to the landscape.

A few shots ring out. It is a covey of black partridges (*Frankolinus frankolinus*) that has risen and receives its due salute. An indistinct form steals through the grass in front of me, is stopped by a shot from the 12-bore, and on being picked up turns out to be a large civet cat. A few wild cocks rise amid loud crowing and fly away over the plain.

Slowly the long, straight line moves without further hindrance over the open ground in the direction of the camp. Now and then partridges or snipe get up, or a deer runs for its life. The shots are amusing, but difficult, and shooting snipe or woodcock from a lurching elephant is about the hardest kind of sport to be found. The sun sinks more and more, and by the time we reach the camp it has disappeared below the horizon; its

place is taken by a round full moon, and soon we are sitting in front of the tent door with a pipe and a whisky-and-soda, enjoying the fresh coolness of the evening, and discussing the various phases of an eventful day's sport. But later in the evening, when all is quiet in the camp and I walk up and down the broad street of tents alone under the flashing stars of the tropical sky, listening to the nocturnal sounds, I hear now and then a soft purring like that of a cat; this is the tiger stealing round cautiously and treacherously, stalking his prey in the dark silence of the night.

Thus one day after another went by, with varying fortunes, but all equally interesting and agreeable. Altogether we shot during this time one buffalo, three leopards, two wild pigs and four civet cats, besides a number of hares, partridges, woodcock and snipe. One of the three leopards offered a very interesting shot, as he flew like an arrow, trying to get across a few yards of open space between two points of jungle, and was brought down in doing so. This episode involuntarily carried my thoughts back to similar snap-shots at home, when puss has doubled and one stands waiting for her hasty retreat across a narrow forest path.

As will be seen, unfortunately no tiger was bagged. In this respect we really had persistent

bad luck. Of all the khubbers, only one was of tiger, and although time after time we came upon perfectly fresh tracks, not one of the coveted striped cats was ever found in the beat. When we returned to camp on the last evening, we found great excitement among the servants, and they all collected, yelling and gesticulating, round our elephants. It appeared that about an hour before our arrival a big tiger had come down to drink in the little river, hardly 150 yards from the camp, and all those left at home had stood on the bank by the tents and watched him. It was then too late in the evening to do anything, but early the following morning some drives were made about the spot in the doubtful hope that the big cat might have stayed the night there; the only thing we got was—a porcupine.

Unfortunately, the time I had at my disposal soon came to an end, and much against my will I was obliged to leave our hospitable friends and say good-bye to the glorious camp-life. At midday Lewenhaupt and I left the camp in Cooch Behar, and on the following morning we were back in Calcutta. But judge of my mortification when I learned a little later that on the afternoon of the very day on which we left the camp a big tiger had been shot in the immediate neighbourhood by one of the Maharaja's gentlemen. That was really a piece of bad luck.

In spite of my disappointment at not even seeing the tail of one of these animals, those cheery and refreshing days of sport in Cooch Behar will nevertheless always remain among my pleasantest memories of the Indian peninsula.

CHAPTER XV

A RUSH THROUGH NORTHERN INDIA

LEWENHAUPT and I had now to catch up the rest of our party, who had left Calcutta at about the same time as we started for Cooch Behar, and who were now at Delhi, after having "done" Benares and Agra. To manage both these places proved to be impossible for us, however attractive the Holy City might be with its many interesting palaces, temples, and Burning Ghauts. For people who, like ourselves, have only a little over a month at their disposal in India, cannot possibly see everything, and it is not very easy to combine jungle-life with sight-seeing; though far be it from me to say that we in any way regretted the division of our time in favour of the former but to the detriment of the latter.

Giving up Benares, then, we got on board the Punjab mail the same evening, and after twenty-four hours' unbroken railway journey—during which we passed in review from the carriage window the minarets of the Holy City, the winding streets of Allahabad, and the old walls of Cawnpore, associated with ugly memories of the great Mutiny—we arrived

at 10 p.m. in the famous city of Agra on the Ganges' broad tributary, the Jumna.

It was a warm moonlight evening, and in spite of the tiring journey we decided, as soon as we had had something to eat at the hotel and washed off the worst of the dust, to proceed at once to the far-famed Taj Mahal.

The whole city was already asleep, and the deserted roads wound like white ribbons through the dark foliage in the extensive gardens of the Cantonments, where the only creatures abroad were a few sleepy pack-camels, whose grotesque shadows jogged slowly along the dusty roadway. After about a quarter of an hour's drive we stopped, entered the broad gate in the wall that surrounds the sanctuary on all sides—and the Taj Mahal lay before us, gleaming white in the clear light of the moon.

How can my poor pen describe this masterpiece, which has already inspired so many poets and authors with lofty poems and ardent romances? It is a thing that must be seen, for it will never be worthily reproduced in language, and any description only gives an obscure reflection of a greatness that is felt.

Like a faultless, lustrous Oriental pearl the masterpiece among all the treasures of India lay dreaming, a white jewel enclosed in a frame of dark cypresses, with the flashing starry sky as a background. The soft lines of the mighty marble dome



THE TAJ MAHAL.

(To face p. 274.)

70. April
1880

and the defiant elevation of the four minarets formed an organic whole, so perfect, so instinct with beauty, that one involuntarily passed a hand over one's eyes, wondering whether it was not merely a beautiful dream or an unreal image. Like glittering bands of silver the cool marble ponds extended up to the sanctuary, bordered on each side by lofty cypresses and climbing roses, with dark, luxuriant foliage behind. All was silent and still; not a rustle, not a whisper was heard, and the air was full of the scent of roses and lavender. Peace breathed from every stone, every flower, every quivering moonbeam; peace to the grave of the beloved, peace to the memory of Arjmand Banu! And the mind was irresistibly seized with a feeling of gratitude towards this woman, whose spirit seemed still to float beneath the lofty marble vaults, simply for having lived and been capable of inspiring a feeling deep and strong enough to be still perceptible to later generations after a lapse of centuries.

With lingering steps we approached the sanctuary—it seemed almost profane to tread these pavements with dusty shoes, where the Mohammedan believer never enters except bare-footed—and passed devoutly through the broad portal. From the roof of the mighty dome hung a flickering oil-lamp, and in the middle of the floor—surrounded by a most delicate grille of carved marble—stood the two splendidly carved and inlaid alabaster cenotaphs of Mumtaz Mahal (Arjmand Banu) and Shah

Jehan. Wherever the eye turned in the great hall, it was met by the gleam of costly mosaics, and the interstices were carved with artistic reliefs. The echo was so powerful that a long-drawn "Allah-il-Allah" from one of the guardians was repeated a hundredfold in the lofty roof and still reverberated long after among the polished walls of the dome. A narrow flight of steps led down to the vault of the actual tomb, where the two coffins—also of alabaster—are placed exactly under the respective cenotaphs.

The stroke of midnight had long resounded before we could make up our minds to leave the enchanted spot.

But who was this remarkable woman, Arjmand Banu? I hear the reader exclaim. I will answer the question by giving him a brief extract from a portion of the ancient history of India.

As early as the seventh century A.D. hordes of Mohammedan Arab tribes began to ravage the north-west of India, but the great migration did not take place till 1001 A.D., under the fanatical and predatory Mahmud of Ghazni. It was chiefly the country about Guzerat that was conquered by him, but by the end of the twelfth century the Afghans had extended their power as far as Delhi. They pressed on to the east and south, and between the years 1295 and 1315 conquered the whole of Southern India. On account of their nomadic nature these Arabs never gave themselves time to

settle down and become great builders, so that monuments of their period are not very numerous or conspicuous.

In the year 1395 another invasion occurred under the great Tartar chieftain Timur or Tamerlane, who after a sanguinary struggle conquered Delhi. The Afghan rule ended with the battle of Panipat in 1526, when the last prince, Ibrahim of the house of Lodi, was totally defeated by Babar, a prince of Mongol race and a direct descendant, in the sixth generation, of Tamerlane. With this Babar, or "the Tiger" as he is sometimes called, begins the brilliant period of Indian history, and it was his descendants who ruled in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries over the Mogul Empire. But only in the reign of his grandson, Akbar the Great (1556-1605), did the country attain that fabulous splendour and prosperity the legends of which are still in the mouths of all. At Fatipur Sikri, "the City of Roses," about twelve miles from Agra, he built his capital of sandstone and marble, with mosques and mausoleums inlaid with mother-of-pearl and precious stones, but afterwards abandoned all this magnificence at the desire of the pious fakir Sheik Selim, and built himself a new capital at Agra, which in splendour of decoration was not inferior to its predecessor. With remarkable talents, a refined sense of beauty and a deeply rooted respect for justice, he united an unusually high degree of toleration, and it is related that, of

his three favourite wives, one was of Hindu birth, one of Turkish, and the third a Christian. Each of them had her own church and priests, and one of Akbar's favourite distractions is said to have been listening to disputations between the champions of the different religions. His dust lies buried at Secundra, not far from Agra. Upon his tombstone a black hole yawns, where once the great Koh-i-noor diamond gleamed, before it was stolen in the eighteenth century by the predatory Persians.

His son Jehangir succeeded his father on the throne, but was a comparatively insignificant ruler, chiefly known for his extravagant dissipation. By his wife, Nur Jahan—the daughter of a Persian of low rank, who, thanks to his rich talents and eminent qualities, had gained the confidence of Akbar—he had a son, Jehan, who succeeded his father in 1628 and reigned till 1658. And with him we have reached the builder of the Taj.

Shah Jehan was a refined lover of beauty in an even higher degree than his famous grandfather, and knew how to translate his ideas and plans into reality. None of the many Mogul emperors can compare with him in this respect, and all his dreams, embodied in white marble, have made his name immortal. A man of noble and lofty character, equally great in the pursuits of peace and of war, he worked assiduously for the good of his

country, and never before has any empire been able to show a period of such magnificence and glory.

In 1615 the great Emperor married Arjmand Banu, granddaughter of the Persian Mirza Ghiyas Itimad-ud-Daulah, whose daughter, Nur Jahan, had married Jehangir. Jehan and his young bride were thus cousins; even as children they had played together on the banks of the Jumna, and it is said that more intimate relations between husband and wife have never existed. As Empress, Arjmand Banu received the name of Mumtaz Mahal, that is "Ornament of the Palace," and was equally renowned for her great wisdom and her loftiness of mind.

Their happiness was, however, of short duration, for in 1629 the gentle Arjmand Banu died after giving birth to her eighth child. Her husband's sorrow and despair knew no bounds. In memory of the beloved he erected the Taj Mahal, the masterpiece of Saracenic architecture and the most splendid monument that was ever raised over a woman. The treasures, not only of India, but also of Afghanistan and Tibet, had to contribute to the embellishment of the tomb. Skilled artists were sent for from Europe, among whom Austin of Bordeaux occupied a prominent position. When at last, after twenty years' work, the edifice, "designed by Titans and executed by jewellers," was completed, it had cost a sum of nearly three million

pounds, and 17,000 workmen had been employed upon it day and night.

Shah Jehan's original idea had been to erect a corresponding mausoleum of black marble to himself on the other side of the Jumna and connect the two tombs by a silver bridge. But this plan was never realised, for in 1658 he was dethroned by his own son, Aurang-Zeb, and languished for eight long years, a prisoner in Agra Fort. When he was at the point of death he was led out upon one of the walls of the fortress and died there with his gaze fixed upon his most beautiful creation, the Taj Mahal, where he lies buried by the side of the beloved Mumtaz Mahal.

After the death of the Emperor Aurang-Zeb in 1707 the great empire fell into decadence and declined more and more. Persians, Afghans, and Mahrattas ravaged the country in turn and carried off many of its most valuable treasures ; amongst others the Koh-i-noor and the costly peacock throne from the hall of audience in Agra Fort. The last descendant of the Moguls was Bahadur Shah ; after the Mutiny in 1857 he was banished for life to Rangoon.

The next day Lewenhaupt and I devoted exclusively to sight-seeing at high pressure, and thanks to a good share of energy and constant running from one mosque to another, we managed to get through most of the sights, which as a rule take two days. But it was warm work, and I am

sure we each left about two pounds of moisture on the pavements of the city.

We began with a short visit to the Taj, to get an impression of it by daylight. The sun shone so intensely on the dead-white marble that one was forced to look with half-closed eyes or to wear smoked glasses to avoid being dazzled. The many delicate details now appeared to greater advantage, and the inlaid work especially, with its wealth of stones of different colours, was seen to be masterly ; but otherwise I preferred the lovely moonlight effect of the evening before with its atmosphere of profound feeling, and it is thus that I would choose to remember this costliest gem among all the treasures of India.

From the tops of the minarets there is a splendid view of the river and city. In the foreground the great Agra Fort rises on a hill, enclosed on all sides by high walls of red sandstone with an immense number of loopholes and embrasures, and above its crest one sees slender spires and domes. Thither we now turned our steps, and were soon in a labyrinth of immense sandstone buildings and hideous barracks, among which the most charming marble mosques, terraces, and gardens lay confined.

I will not try the reader's patience by asking him to accompany our ramble among all these ancient monuments, each of which would demand a long chapter and all of them together a whole book. It

is sufficient to say that we spent three hours there, and during that time had an opportunity of admiring the Moti Musjid or Pearl Mosque, erected by Shah Jehan in milk-white marble, wandering through the magnificent Diwan-i-khas (hall of audience), sitting on Akbar's black throne—an immense square block of stone placed on one of the terraces, with a similar, but white one opposite for the Court jester—dreaming in the apartments of the harem, surrounded by a marble grille as fine as a spider's web, through which the air can circulate freely without the sun's rays ever penetrating, and cooling ourselves in imagination in the marble channel which formerly ran through the palace and the bottom of which was once inlaid with silver and mother-of-pearl, giving varied life to the crystal-clear water. But we lingered longest at the little Naginah Musjid, or Jewel Mosque, in the enclosed courtyard of which Shah Jehan spent the last years of his life, and from which he was taken on the day of his death to the "Golden Pavilion," that he might breathe his last with the Jumna at his feet and the Taj Mahal in the background.

Nearly opposite the Fort but on the other side of the river lies the tomb of Itimad-ud-Daulah—Nur Jahan's father—an exquisite little masterpiece in white marble richly inlaid with *pietra dura*. It was the Persian Ghiyas Begh, Akbar's trusted treasurer, who built for himself and his family this mausoleum, which, to be sure, is not to be compared

with the Taj, but nevertheless bears witness in the splendour of its fittings and decoration to the unusually lucrative nature of its builder's office.

For the rest, Agra is a very picturesque city, and its narrow streets, in which two carriages can only pass with the greatest difficulty, swarm with the life of the people. Long lines of shambling camels or heavily laden asses pursue their way undisturbed through the crowd, paying little attention to the loud cries or cracking whips of their drivers. The asses in particular seem to be designed by fate to bear the most and the heaviest burdens, and to this day I am surprised that their little spider legs do not break like matches. There is no pavement for pedestrians. The tiny low shops lie in long rows in the street itself, so to speak, where some of the goods—mostly small wares—are set out. In nine cases out of ten the proprietor lies on the threshold asleep, and when he is not engaged in this harmless occupation he smokes a pipe. But exceptionally he may be seen seated at the lathe, the last, or some other handiwork. High above this everyday scene tower the slender forms of the three sandstone cupolas of the Jama Musjid, one of the largest mosques in India and again a work of the indefatigable Shah Jehan, in the enormous courtyard of which thousands of orthodox Mohammedans assemble at the hour of prayer, and with their faces turned towards Mecca and their

foreheads on the ground cry aloud their "Allah, Allah."

After a well-spent day, Lewenhaupt and I left Agra at sunset and arrived the same night at Delhi, where we found the rest of our party full of Benares, Fatipur Sikri and Agra, and, like ourselves, with the name of Shah Jehan on their lips.

We stayed a few days in the newly created capital of India to examine its sights, none of which, however, was equal to the best of Agra's. The general topic of conversation seemed still to be the Delhi Durbar, which had taken place only a few months before, when an unparalleled magnificence and luxury had been displayed, especially on the part of the native princes, who had assembled to a man. At the same time the foundation-stone of the new capital was laid, that is to say, of that part of it where all the Government buildings are to be erected; but as the whole of this ceremony was wrapped in a mysterious silence up to the last and only announced the day before, it came about that in the hurry a not very suitable place was chosen for the stone in question, and when borings were afterwards made for foundations it was found that the soil of the locality was utterly unfit for the purpose. They were therefore just engaged in moving the famous stone, a thing which the natives regarded as a bad omen for the future of the city.

Altogether opinions were greatly divided about the removal of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. I talked to a good many Englishmen on the subject and found about an equal number for and against. Some considered the undertaking ruinous, as it would absorb fabulous sums to erect a whole new quarter, and at the same time the advantage of the busy trade and widespread communications of the seaport were being abandoned; while others laid stress on the political side of the question, and thought that with its more central position the new capital would have a unifying effect on the whole country and at the same time to a certain extent maintain the traditions of the Great Mogul's days. As regards the natives themselves, they were also divided into two camps: the whole of Eastern Bengal, Assam, and part of Central India ground their teeth with rage over the degradation of their city; while the Punjab, Rajpootana, and the North-West Provinces rejoiced at the revived glory of ancient Delhi. Whether the British Government has made a wise move or not in transferring the capital, the future must be left to show.

Boundless plains with a dry and sterile soil extend all round Delhi. But on these wastes, which in many ways resemble the Roman Campaigna, lie at least a dozen ruined cities, each of which can boast of a flourishing period, duly drenched and ended in blood. Most of them are

of Mohammedan origin, and the oldest monuments above ground date from the middle of the eleventh century. On a little hill, dominating a great part of the plain, lies the old fort of Indrapat or Turama Killa, marking the spot where according to tradition the Aryan city of Indraprastha once stood. Tombs and mausoleums are scattered everywhere, and wherever the eye roams over the level landscape it is met by ruin and decay.

The most interesting spot among all these ruins is undoubtedly the Kutáb Minár, situated about six miles from the city and on the site once occupied by the Hindu Dilli. Here rises the Kutáb, a tower 240 feet high, built in five tiers, of which the three lower ones are of red sandstone, the others of marble. Its founder is said to have been Altamish, and the object of the lofty building was that his consort, a princess of the Hindu faith, might be able to see from its summit a strip of the sacred river Jumna. I cannot help pitying her lot, if she was obliged every day to go up the 387 winding stairs in the interior of the tower, for a climb like that in the warm Indian atmosphere is more fatiguing than one would think; and in fact she appears to have been very thin at the time of her death. The view from the top, however, is more interesting than beautiful, as the burnt-up landscape affords no relief to the eye. On the other hand, one sees at one's feet the whole ruined city, of which the tower forms the centre.

On the square below stands a substantial iron pillar, $23\frac{1}{2}$ feet high and 16 inches in diameter. Its manufacture has always been a riddle, as it is only in our day that large ironworks have been able to produce anything similar. The date 1052 A.D. is inscribed on its foot, as well as the name of Anang Pal, the founder of the Tomar dynasty, but whether he or some one else was its originator has not been discovered. What knowledge the ancient Brahmans must have possessed to execute such a piece of work, a knowledge long since forgotten and replaced by melancholy ignorance and low culture.

The most comfortable way of seeing this Campagna is of course by motor-car, as the roads are broad and good, though somewhat stony. But, merciful Heaven! how the natives treat their unfortunate engines, not to speak of the people they drive; it is really shocking. They are not satisfied with very often running short of oil or supplying its place with some semi-liquid grease, but they also have a perfect passion for regularly driving on their fourth speed, no matter how the car may be running at the time. The natural result of this is that the motor "jumps" and jars in a furious way, so that the whole concern moves forward by jerks. Slowing down at banks or holes is also foreign to their principles; one is mercilessly flung up in the air and then has to find the way back to one's seat as best one can.

For ditches they entertain a sovereign contempt, but are extremely fond of balancing on the edge of them. I was often astonished that we escaped with a whole skin from these excursions, but perhaps still more so at the equanimity with which the engines stood the ill-treatment without striking more often than they did. But then one gets accustomed to anything. . . .

After a stay of four days, we turned our backs on Delhi and continued our journey into Rajpootana, to Jeypore.

A genuine *Indian* city at last! For in my opinion both Agra and Delhi might just as well have been anywhere in Asia Minor or North Africa as far as the character of those cities was concerned, a character which I should be inclined to call Mohammedan-Asiatic. But Jeypore was something quite different. A peculiar charm and atmosphere lies over the place, and never have I seen a city with more pronounced "local colour." The broad, straight streets seemed to have been drawn with a ruler, and on each side stood houses all painted in bright colours with white ornaments and strongly reminding one of the sugar ornaments on a wedding-cake. The origin of this curious decoration is said to have been Jai Singh's—the founder of the city—desire to imitate the splendid red sandstone and white marble buildings of Delhi. In the streets may now and then be seen elephants with rich trappings and some high official in the

howdah, or a troop of bearded Rajpoot warriors riding past like a whirlwind on their lathering horses. Oxen with gaudy trappings draw curious little two-wheeled carts, usually chock-full of women and children, singing and making a noise ; and on the pavements outside the long bazaar buildings fat and sacred cows lie in the sunshine, taking little notice of the busy marketing that goes on all round them. The men look uncommonly well ; they are tall and well-proportioned, and all wear putties—not the tightly clinging Mohammedan trousers that are seen in the eastern parts of the country. The head is wrapped in a bright-coloured turban, usually yellow, but considerably smaller than one is accustomed to see. Kipling, by the way, says very aptly somewhere : “Small turbans swagger Rajpootana.” The women go about in skirts with immensely wide folds of red or brown stripped stuff, with gay-coloured sahris on their heads. They wear besides a mass of ornaments on every conceivable part of the body : ears, nose, wrists, and ankles, with rings on both fingers and toes. There is a movement and a wealth of colour that strongly recall the light-hearted inhabitants of Burma.

During our short visit to Jeypore we were, it is true, the guests of the Maharaja, but stayed with the British Resident in an old Rajpoot palace just outside the town, surrounded by a most beautiful garden, in which hundreds of stately peacocks

passed an idyllic existence. The whole city, in fact, is full of these sacred birds, which at sunrise especially make a deafening noise and wake the inhabitants more infallibly than the shrillest military reveille. There was one rather unusual thing about our quarters, and that was the absence of stairs; in order to reach the first floor we had to walk up a series of sloping corridors, arranged in zigzag.

The old Maharaja appears to be as great a patron of art as of religion. He has founded a school of arts and crafts at his own expense, and the great museum in one of the public parks owes its existence to his personal initiative. But judge of my surprise when, on going through the building, I discovered in a corner two dusty wax figures in Swedish peasants' dress, one from Rättvik and the other from Vingåker.

Unfortunately we had no opportunity of making the Maharaja's acquaintance, as owing to a case of small-pox in his family he was isolated from the outer world. On the other hand, we went over part of his palace, which, however, was of no special interest from an architectural point of view; the part that he lives in looked rather like a big wedding cake in seven stories, and, like all the more important houses of the town, was decorated exclusively with peacock ornaments. One of the wings contained a large and varied library, and by the side of it was the armoury with an extremely

fine collection of old arms, chased and splendidly inlaid. Here we were also shown as a curiosity some twenty huge packing-cases, bound with metal, which the Maharaja had taken with him on his journey to Europe some years before, and which had contained, some his food, some drinking water from the Ganges. He appears to have lived on these supplies the whole time, steadfastly refusing to eat any other food, so as not to lose his high caste.

The garden belonging to the Palace extended over an immense area. It was very well arranged with a number of fountains, and the Court entertainments that are sometimes given there in the evening are said to be among the finest things of their kind. At the extremity of the garden is a large pond, full of sacred crocodiles and turtles. The keepers amuse themselves by tying a piece of meat to the end of a long rope and throwing it out into the water. Instantly one of the big beasts of prey comes swimming at full speed with open jaws to grab the bait, but by pulling in the line at the right moment the keeper entices the crocodile on to the bank, where at last it is allowed to seize the coveted morsel. Then begins a vigorous and highly comical tug of war between man and beast, which usually ends in the latter simply biting through the rope and returning to its proper element with a grin of satisfaction. A number of kites always surround the place and try now and

then to snatch a bit of meat ; in this they are so audacious that they often brush the faces of the natives with their powerful wings.

In an open space adjoining the Palace lies the Jantra, Jai Singh's old observatory, erected at the beginning of the eighteenth century by that astronomical and mathematical Maharaja. A quantity of colossal platforms, stagings, curves, and segments of circles stand here, all of which were once used for taking observations, determining the position of the heavenly bodies, and so on. It is staggering to think of all the study involved in the erection of this apparatus ; but of course astronomy has from time immemorial been the science of the East, from which the West derived its knowledge.

A little way beyond the Jantra, on the slope of Tiger Hill, the Maharajas of Jeypore lie buried. The heavy, plain stone coffins stand under richly sculptured marble roofs, and by each of them a fire is kept continually burning on a little stone hearth, to scare away evil spirits from the last resting-place of the dead.

The sun was already setting when we returned to our quarters, taking the road through the leafy public park. We were lucky, as on that day a great religious festival was being held with its accompanying fair, to keep the small-pox away from the city. The people were therefore in their best clothes, their smartest sahris, and their most becoming turbans, and our passage through the

motley crowds gave the impression of a drive between immense moving flower-beds. The women mostly went arm in arm, singing and laughing to their hearts' content, or performing some improvised dance in the middle of the road. Here and there a horseman appeared in smart frock-coat, looking down upon the throng with a dignified and superior smile, or a carriage came by at a walking pace with notabilities in it, holding themselves with a grand air among the soft cushions. Not a single European was to be seen—there are only twenty or so in the whole city—nothing but dark-hued, smiling faces on every side. And over the scene the setting sun shed its last shimmer of gold, spreading a subdued and chastening light everywhere—this was at last the India of my dreams. And as we drove on, countless little lamps were flickering by the roadside, placed upon simple stone altars outside the huts of the natives; beside them stood the master of the house with a big bell or gong in his hand, ringing for the gods to take part in his frugal supper.

On the following morning we went to the old ruined city of Amber, some in carriages and tongas, some on horseback and some on elephants. The road was long and deserted, but now and then inquisitive monkeys came out of their hiding-places behind abandoned houses or fallen rocks and stared with unfeigned surprise at the advancing caravan. The road went uphill, until we reached the top of

a ridge and saw the little town below us in a basin, surrounded on all sides by lofty rocks crowned with the towers and crenellated walls of fortresses. Half-way up the slope stood the gleaming white palace, built in the seventeenth century of the purest marble. The building itself was extraordinarily massive, evidently designed to stand a siege, but several of the apartments were nevertheless state rooms and could show a wealth of inlaid work, in which pieces of looking-glass were prominent, making the walls glitter in a curious way. The greatest luxury had of course been bestowed on the women's apartments, outside which was a little verdant garden on one of the roofs—a veritable oasis in the midst of the desert of stone.

The reason of the sudden abandonment of the old capital in 1728 and its removal to Jeypore is unknown. Some attribute it to a prophecy, others to a caprice of the reigning Prince. But the most probable explanation is that its confined situation among the hills did not afford the increasing community sufficient room for expansion, and was in addition difficult to defend, especially when heavy guns had begun to play a decisive part in the mutual conflicts of Indian princes; for if only one of the mountain forts were taken, the fate of the city would be sealed.

While the non-sporting section of the party spent the afternoon in the Maharaja's garden,



THROUGH THE PALACE GATES OF AMBER.

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watching a number of animals being set together to fight in an enclosure, Lewenhaupt and I, together with our English host, went to the Royal hunting-grounds, just outside Jeypore, to shoot blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*). The ground was open and sandy, with small low hillocks. It was exactly like stalking roebuck in the south of Sweden, except that our vehicle here was a gaily decorated buffalo-cart on two wheels.

Game was extraordinarily abundant, and we could often see the handsome animals in herds of a hundred or more. In light and graceful bounds they made off over the plains, but if surprised and scared, they first give one or two jumps in the air before starting to run. Their twisted, spiral horns stood out like pointed antennæ, and when the head is thrown back they ought to reach the hind-quarters to be considered worth keeping as a trophy. I myself shot two, the horns of one of which measured 23, the other 24 inches; the record is 29. I might have brought down a good many more, but as the animals were so far from shy that one could sometimes go up within fifty yards of them, the sport did not seem to me very good. All the more interesting was it to watch all this game, especially when two bucks were fighting, as they rushed at each other with such recklessness that the crash of their horns could be heard a long way off. A number of wild pigs also came within range; but they are not

shot here, being reserved for pig-sticking. This is a sport on which the English are specially keen, regarding it as one of the finest in India.

Later in the evening a Naga dance was arranged by members of the Maharaja's corps de ballet on the terrace in the garden of the Residency. The dancers, numbering about fifty men, made their entrance, preceded by torch-bearers clad in red; the band went in front, consisting of a single man blowing a curiously shaped old copper horn, from which he coaxed some plaintive, not very melodious notes. The men were smart, tall, and well-built; their costume was as simple as possible, as only a long coloured shirt covered their otherwise naked bodies.

The first part of the dance consisted of a sort of fencing with long, straight swords; the chief object seemed to be to swing the weapon as rapidly as possible in wide circles *without* touching the opponent. Then followed a particularly picturesque fire-dance, with lightning-like juggling with burning sticks and torches; after which the entertainment concluded with the horn-blower taking up a position in the middle and blowing with all the force of his lungs, while the others executed the wildest war-dance with the musician as a centre. The whole thing was really extremely picturesque and specially typical of Jeypore.

The same night we left the city, and once more rolled westward over the endless desert plains of

Rajpootana, to wake next morning at the railway station of Ajmere.

It was a picturesque little town we had come to, situated at the foot of the rocky range of Taragarh. Ajaypal, one of the Chohan kings at about the commencement of our era, is said to have been its founder, so that the town can boast a long history. It was formerly surrounded on all sides by a lofty wall, of which only remnants are now standing, together with two of the five enormous gates that afforded communication with the outer world. The principal monuments, however, are of far later date, and here again we find products of the indefatigable Mogul Emperors' love of building, the best preserved specimens of which are some white marble pavilions, mirrored in the unbroken surface of Ana Saugar. This lake, situated in the middle of a great sandy plain and covering an area of many acres, was dug by Raja Ana in the eleventh century to improve the dry climate of the city, and is still the pride and chief charm of Ajmere. On a little hill close to the lake stands the British Residency, and it was under its hospitable roof, with an enchanting view over Ana Saugar and the mountains beyond, that we took up our temporary abode. The house, it is true, was not a large one, but in India an almost unlimited number of guests can always be received, as those who cannot find rooms simply live in tents.

In contrast to the rest of Rajpootana, which is

governed by native Princes under British suzerainty, Ajmere forms a little province by itself, under the direct administration of the Viceroy at Delhi, whose local representative thus has far greater power and authority than is the case with other officials of corresponding category.

The first day of our visit was occupied in an excursion to "the most sacred of all the lakes of India," Pushkar, lying up among the mountains in a basin strongly resembling the crater of an extinct volcano. Hither come hundreds of thousands of pilgrims every year to purify body and soul in the turbid water, which is full of sacred crocodiles and fish. It happens not unfrequently that while the zealous pilgrim is feeding the latter during his bath, he himself gets eaten up by the former; and as the animals are sacred, nothing is ever done to rescue the unfortunate victim; on the contrary, such a death is regarded as leading directly to bliss.

Broad stone steps lead down to the lake from hundreds of temples and mosques, which surround the water on all sides. I believe that if the buildings of this little town were counted, many more would be found dedicated to the worship of some divinity than designed as dwellings. The most important is a Brahman temple with old frescoes, in which the three-headed deity—symbolising Mahadeo or Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Siva the destroyer and reviver—sat huddled up in a dark niche. A clean-shaven priest

in a flesh-coloured caftan showed us round, and at parting hung long garlands of flowers round our necks,—a genuine Indian custom, which denotes the great joy or sorrow of the giver, according to circumstances. By the temple door sat an old fakir covered with ashes and with his eyes closed. We were told that for the last fifty years he had never seen the light of day, and that during that time he had lived entirely on goats' milk. In certain cases these exhibitions are undoubtedly "genuine" and worthy of all admiration, but in many others they are pure humbug; that is to say, the holy man takes up his post at daybreak in some place that is often visited by tourists, arranges with the guides that he is a fakir whom "the Sahib" must certainly see, and then takes the opportunity of begging a few coins for his daily bread—a remarkably convenient and practical way of earning it.

The following morning was devoted to seeing the two most noteworthy buildings in the city, the Arhai-din-ka-jhopra and the Dargah. The former, the name of which means "the two and a half days' hut," is now in ruins. Originally a Jain temple, it was altered in the thirteenth century to a mosque, the effect of which is that the two styles have been mixed together, giving the still well-preserved façade a very original appearance. The name refers to the short time in which the building is said to have been erected.

The other, the Dargah, is a large block of buildings—chiefly mosques—erected round the tomb of the holy Chisti Kwajah Muin-ud-din, one of the most eminent supporters of Indian Moham-medanism in the thirteenth century. We were received with deafening rolls on two old silver kettle-drums, presented to the place by Akbar. On either side of the entrance stood two huge cauldrons ; on feast days they are used for cooking food, which is doled out gratis to the pilgrims. The tomb itself is almost hidden behind grilles of marble and silver, but we had a glimpse of a richly chased coffin of the same metal, which was said to contain miraculous relics. In front of it hung many rows of hideous great coloured-glass chandeliers—presumably set up quite recently, and most certainly “made in Germany.” Only orthodox followers of the Prophet seemed to be allowed to approach the sanctuary, and to us Christians it was only vouchsafed to throw a hasty glance at the finery from a distance.

After this Lewenhaupt and I went to Kishengarh to shoot nilgai (*Boselephus tragocamelus*). This was among the most desolate tracts I have ever seen : a wide, extended plain with bare hills on either side, and a soil so dry and sandy that only thorny trees and prickly bushes managed here and there to eke out a stunted existence in the otherwise perfectly sterile desert landscape.

The midday heat was burning as we cautiously

stole forward from bush to bush, eagerly on the look-out for game. Sometimes we put up a covey of partridges or a scared blackbuck darted off across the plain. Quite unexpectedly we caught sight of a herd of nilgais, which were peacefully meditating behind some bushes, making vigorous attempts to keep off the flies with their long tails. After a long stalk we at last came within range, and I had occasion to make a really fine—miss! However, my companion's shot was all the more brilliant in retrieving the honour of Swedish sport, and the next moment the huge antelope-buck lay bathed in its own blood. An uglier beast is difficult to imagine. The dark-grey body is something like an elk's in size and shape, but the head is much smaller, and is adorned by two diminutive horns, altogether out of proportion to the rest of the animal. A thin, striped mane covers the long neck, and the tail would suit an ordinary domestic cow. As a rule the nilgai is only shot for the sake of its flesh, which is said to be extremely tasty; but its horns, on account of their small size (the record is $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches), are not much sought after by trophy-hunters.

When the hero of the day had been duly snapped together with the carcase, we returned to Ajmere, though not till we had shot a fine blackbuck. These animals, unlike those of Jeypore, were here excessively shy, and therefore offered excellent sport.

During the afternoon a visit was paid to Mayo College, a university to which only the sons or relatives of Indian Princes are admitted. About two hundred pupils are received at the age of eight to ten, and their education usually lasts till they are twenty-one. It is conducted entirely by English masters and on the English plan, which means that sport and open-air life form an important factor, side by side with the theoretical lessons. The boys live in their own houses; that is to say, the different Princes have had quarters built for their sons, where the latter are lodged, together with other pupils from the same district. The main building is of a very monumental character in the traditional Mogul style, and includes, besides halls and lecture-rooms, a whole series of light and airy class-rooms.

On our arrival the whole school was drawn up on a large stand at one end of the extensive playground. On the lowest steps sat a group in riding-breeches and boots with blazers and turbans in the college colours, red, yellow, blue, white and green; but otherwise the dress was a long white coat, buttoned up to the throat, and a many-coloured turban. It was a very fascinating sight to see all these bright-eyed youths, whose build and bearing might have been envied by any young aristocrat. Their bronze complexions contrasted splendidly with the showy head-dress, and never have I seen so many handsome faces at one time. Two youths

were specially noticeable ; they had been pages of honour to the King and Queen during the Delhi Durbar, and in commemoration of it had received flashing monograms in jewels, which now adorned their turbans and fastened the regulation little plume of gold thread.

A number of games, on foot and on horseback, were played on the ground below ; in the latter especially the players gave proof of great skill in horsemanship, and sat their active little polo ponies as if glued to the saddle. The exhibition concluded with musical chairs, in which the youngest boys were in their element, and enjoyed themselves heartily. When we left there was no end to the cheering and waving of handkerchiefs, presumably on account of the holiday we had got for the boys out of their headmaster. Even Indian Princes' sons evidently like to be let off lessons.

Next day we left idyllic Ajmere and went westward over boundless plains to Abu Road.

So the railway station was called, but that grilling spot was far from being the object of our visit. In the middle of the great plain rises Mount Abu, 5000 feet high, renowned alike for its marvellous temples and for its pleasant climate, and thither it was that we were borne in two panting motor-cars. The road went upward in winding bends, always upward, and the higher we came, the cooler was the air and the wider the view. Below us we had the scorched and torrid plain, and all around rose

imposing hills, on the weathered sides of which evident traces could be seen, even at a height of 3000 feet above the sea, of the action of water in former times, in the shape of immense giant's cauldrons. The natives, every one of whom was armed with short sword or bow and arrows, were well-grown men and salaamed with conspicuous politeness before our sorely tried cars, which had to stop no less than three times to renew the supply of water in their boiling radiators. Monkeys were abundant, jumping from one ledge of rock to another in mighty leaps. One of these long-tailed animals even tried to jump on to the car; he hung to the mud-guard and had time to spit in our faces before we got rid of him.

At last we arrived at the little town, imbedded among leafy trees and swaying palms, which is said to be a veritable paradise after the rains, with thousands of flowers, running streams, and carolling song-birds. We were the guests of the Maharaja of Sirohi,¹ were lodged in his "guest-house," and were received in the kindest way with big baskets of fruit and long garlands of flowers by his son, a delicate and rather backward young man, who had been sent to do the honours in place of his father.

The lions of the place are the Dilwarra Temples, just outside the town, incomparable masterpieces of the highly developed architecture of the ancient

¹ A little principality among the hills, situated about 30 miles from Mount Abu.

Jains, containing the most delicate marble sculptures in the world. The sect was founded by a certain Mahariva, a contemporary of Buddha, and is properly to be regarded as a variation of the latter's doctrine. The Jains' horror of killing any living creature is so great that many of them tie a piece of muslin in front of their mouths to prevent flies and gnats from coming in by mistake and thus meeting a premature death ; for the same reason they never burn candles after dark, as an insect might happen to scorch its wings and thus interfere with the migration of some poor soul towards Nirvana. For, unlike the Buddhists, they believe that everything, both animate and inanimate, possesses a soul, and they observe their rigorous doctrines very strictly. Their temples are never large or conspicuous, but all the greater care has been spent on their internal decoration, in which veritable masterpieces have been accomplished.

Two of these edifices are to be seen at Dilwarra, one of which was erected in the eleventh century by a wealthy merchant, Vimala Shah, the other at the close of the twelfth century by two brothers named Tejahpala and Vastupala. You enter a spacious hall with a roof supported by columns, every stone of which is chiselled into delicate ornaments of flowers and mythological images. The whole work is executed in the daintiest creamy white marble, which gives one the impression of carved ivory. At one end lies the sanctuary itself,

which may not be entered ; but through the grille you see the seated image of Parswanatha in jet-black marble, contrasting sharply with the frost-like effect of its surroundings. The figure is rather over life-size, and huge gems glitter in its dark mass ; the expression of the face reminds one a good deal of Buddha, but the lofty calm is absent.

Round the courtyard of the temple run long colonnades, divided into niches, each of which has its divinity chiselled in white marble. Among these is a female deity who, in contrast to the rest, conceals her nudity behind a showy robe ; and farther on is a long row of miniature elephants in stalls, naïvely executed by the artist but conceived with a good deal of humour.

The two temples are alike in the main, with the exception of the details, which are infinitely varied ; it is said that not two stones can be found with the same decoration. Close by is a little mason's yard, intended for replacing broken or decayed pieces with new ones. No marble is quarried on the spot, but it has to be brought a long distance from the plains ; we may well wonder how the ancient Jains managed to transport all these large blocks, which even in our day can only be dragged up there with great difficulty.

Many pleasant excursions may be made from Mount Abu, but unfortunately our limited time did not allow much in this direction. The only one we made was a hurried visit to the Achilghar



DETAILS OF THE DILWARRA TEMPLE.



SCULPTURED MARBLE ROOF OF THE DILWARRA TEMPLE.

[To face p. 36.]

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temple, situated on a lofty rock, 4500 feet above the sea, from which one has a most extensive view over the plains. The journey was made in rickshaws, accompanied by audible groans from the coolies, who nevertheless ran up the steep paths as if they were under the whip. Coming down they went still faster, and it seemed to be a pure chance that the light vehicle did not turn a somersault over the countless pointed rocks of which the road was full.

The evening before our departure the Maharajakumar had assembled about a hundred of the aboriginal inhabitants of the district, the Bhils, to entertain us with their national dances. The courtyard was lighted by torches, and to the sound of tom-toms and square fiddles men and women entered with sticks in their hands, which were struck together in time to the music, and began to jump about like big monkeys, the men outside in a wide circle, the women in the middle. The dance grew wilder and wilder and the dust rose in a thick cloud over the field of battle; they were all slightly intoxicated to add to the excitement. After a while the hubbub suddenly broke off and a lot of tricks with swords and torches followed, very like those we had seen in Jeypore. Some dancing-girls in gaudy costumes and jingling ornaments also performed solos and danced the snake dance and the dragon dance. In the former they imitate a snake-charmer, but instead of a pipe they use a

scarlet cloth, one end of which is held between the teeth ; in the latter they show how a flying dragon is to be treated gracefully. The final number was a song, specially composed for the occasion and bellowed in unison, after which we were presented with all the musical instruments, piled up in a great heap at our feet. Good tone demands, however, that an excuse be found for restoring such presents, with the exception of one or two, for which a few rupees are given in exchange.

There was something touchingly naïve and primitive about the whole spectacle, which showed on what a low level of culture these people must stand ; for frolics of this kind are best suited to semi-savages and barbarians.

The following morning we left the fresh mountain air behind us and returned to the baking plains, which felt doubly hot after the coolness we had enjoyed.

I expect by this time the reader has had more than enough of old temples, mosques and mausoleums, and therefore I skip all sight-seeing during our short stay at the next place, Ahmedabad, although there was much that was worth seeing, even if it did not come up to the places we had already visited. This again was a genuine Moham-medan-Asiatic city, surrounded by an immense wall and intersected by narrow winding streets, in which a good-sized motor-car could not get on without scraping its mud-guards against houses and door-

posts. The usual motley life pulsed everywhere through these labyrinths, but here four-footed individuals, monkeys, also took a prominent part in it. If Jeypore was by preference the city of peacocks, Ahmedabad was in a still higher degree that of the monkeys; for in almost every doorway or window sat a grimacing long-tailed animal, unless they preferred to take up a position in the middle of the street, and, with a scornful grin on their impertinent faces, compel the traffic to go round them. For monkeys are sacred animals and may not be kicked out of the way, a thing they have evidently discovered for themselves and know how to take advantage of.

The city is specially famous for its manufactories of silks and carpets, the latter of which in particular are well worth a visit. Through some shabby back door you enter an open yard, where the looms are set up in long rows, each with a little roof above it. The work is done, as a rule, by boys of from six to eight, with incredible dexterity, their hands flying as swiftly as larks' wings to and fro over the web. At the back of the loom sits the foreman directing the work. Generally his nose is crowned by a huge pair of horn spectacles, and in his hand he holds a dirty piece of crumpled paper, on which the pattern is given, partly in a smudgy drawing, partly in figures and letters. Just as if he were reading a book, he drawls out the old document, and the boys repeat it word for word.

Each has to keep his ears open and use his fingers to finish the stitches before the others have done and the lesson begins again. Thus they sit in rain and sunshine, hour after hour, and little does the spoilt Occidental guess, when he walks on soft carpets, what an immense amount of labour they represent, how many children's sighs and tears are woven into the rich pattern, how many joyless young years it has really claimed.

When visiting the Gymkhana Club at Ahmedabad—the rendezvous of the not very numerous English colony—chance threw us in the way of an old major of the regiment quartered there. On hearing who we were, he became extremely interested, for, said he, “there hangs in our mess a large portrait of your ancestor, Charles John, which is the pride of the regiment.” We on our part were, of course, no less interested, and went there with him. Quite correct; in the place of honour hung a portrait of the first Bernadotte, “presented by H.M. the King of Sweden, Gustaf v., to the 7th Duke of Connaught's Own Punjab Regiment,” as the inscription read. It was this regiment, I may explain, which took Bernadotte prisoner in an engagement between French and English colonial troops, and on the opposite wall hung his vanquisher, the then commander of the regiment, Sir Eyre Coote. I cannot deny that I felt quite taken aback at coming across, in a little Indian garrison, this portrait, of the existence of which I was certainly

aware, though without having an idea of where it was hung ; and, as I say, only a pure accident brought me to the place. After all, the world is very small.

With this episode our rush through Northern India came to an end, as the following morning saw us already installed in Government House, Bombay, enjoying the fresh sea breezes that sweep round the sides of Malabar Hill.

CHAPTER XVI

BOMBAY

IT was a real delight to the eyes to see fresh, clear sea-water again, after all the muddy puddles of Bengal and Rajpootana, which acquire the undisputed rank, honour and dignity of lakes, irrespective of their size or depth. But, as we know, everything is relative, and when there is no other water for many miles round, even a hand-basin becomes a bottomless inland sea. All the more did we enjoy the surpassingly beautiful situation of Government House on the extreme point of the Malabar promontory, framed in luxuriant verdure and surrounded on three sides by the glittering waves of the Arabian Sea. An idyllic little bungalow, fitted with all modern comfort, had most kindly been placed at our disposal by the Governor of Bombay, and here we spent our last days on the ancient soil of India.

At the entrance stood two sentries of the Body-guard. They were among the finest fellows I have ever seen, at least six feet in height, and with powerful, well-proportioned frames. The jet-black beard was kept together by the usual thin hair-net

and twisted into two points, which were brushed up behind the ears. Their uniform consisted of a long, dark-blue coat with a coloured sash and epaulettes, gauntlets, white riding-breeches, jack-boots, and on the head a huge gold-embroidered turban. A long lance completed the equipment. Similar bodyguards, more or less numerous, but always of native soldiers, are found at the residence of every Governor or higher official in India, and accompany him on all his journeys and official duties. They are chosen with great care from among the warrior castes, and the ranks are generally recruited from the Sikhs. This Hindu sect, which traces its origin from a certain Nanak Shah in the middle of the fifteenth century and numbers about two millions, has always been famous for its soldierly qualities. The Sikhs gave the English a hard nut to crack in the nineteenth century before finally acknowledging their sovereignty after two sanguinary wars, since which time they have formed the flower of the Anglo-Indian army; their headquarters are at Amritsar in the Punjab. A magnificent supply of horses and accoutrements belongs to these bodyguards, and the stables on Malabar Hill are specially famous for their fine animals, chiefly of Syrian and Arab breed.

Bombay is in the strict sense of the term a "continental" city. Here the low houses and bazaars of the natives rub shoulders with palatial official buildings and fashionable hotels, all erected

in the traditional style common to most of the provincial towns of England. In the outer roads some score of big steamers lie at anchor, showing the flags of pretty nearly every seafaring nation, and nearer in the Union Jack floats from a few grey cruisers which have their station here.

If you take a walk in the afternoon, just before sunset, along Queen's Road, you will find on this broad highway, which runs along the shore between Malabar and Colaba points, a motley crowd of all the different races and colours the city has to show. Here Chinese and Japanese mix with Malays and Negritos ; Tibetans and Afghans with Persians and Arabs ; Afridis and Sikhs from the northernmost provinces of India with Tamils and Singhalese from Ceylon's hilly isle. A continuous stream of motor-cars sweeps along the asphalt roadway, carrying busy officials from their offices to their well-earned rest or rich Parsis for their indispensable evening drive. It is the latter in particular that attract one's attention. The men wear a black frock-coat, white trousers, and on their head a shiny hat of black oilcloth, perfectly round and much resembling a saucepan turned upside down. The women are as a rule very handsome, though somewhat voluminous according to Western ideas ; their swelling forms are draped in garments of many folds, and their head and shoulders are always covered with a thin veil in striking colours.

The Parsis form the plutocracy of India, and

are celebrated for their great business talents and their wealth. When the Saracens devastated Persia in the middle of the seventh century, a number of the inhabitants fled to Guzerat on the west coast of India, where they were not only given protection by the native princes, but were received with open arms on account of their culture and civilisation. From this migration on a small scale the Parsis of the present day trace their descent, and although by degrees they have spread over the whole continent, they are still chiefly to be found in Bombay and the district to the north of it, where some 90,000 souls hold fast to the old Zoroastrian doctrines which they brought from the land of their origin. They worship the elements as sacred, and in order not to pollute them, their dead may neither be buried, burnt, nor thrown into the sea. But the wise Zoroaster knew a way out of the difficulty. He studied the birds of the air and found in the vultures an excellent substitute for grave-diggers or body-burners, and thus it is that the Parsis to this day avail themselves of this way of getting rid of their dead.

In the middle of the most fashionable villas and on the top of the verdant Malabar Hill lies the burying-place or the "Towers of Silence." A broad flight of steps leads up to the enclosed precinct, by the gate of which a fat old fox-terrier is tied up. If the dog looks at the corpse just as it is carried past, it is thought to be purified

and liberated from evil spirits. The first thing one sees is a well-kept little garden with a gloomy temple on one side, within the walls of which white-robed priests watch and tend the undying fire. But beyond it stand low, whitewashed towers, which the visitor may only view at a distance. They are open at the top, and on the edges sit long rows of fat, sleepy vultures, waiting for their supper; for funerals always take place at sunset. On the stone floor within are three concentric rows of cavities, on which the priests arrange the corpses so that men are on the outside, women next, and children in the middle. The centre of the tower is formed by a great well, into which the bones are swept after a few days, to be gradually converted into phosphorus and lime.

There are five of these towers for the different categories of human beings. Suicides and those who have died in hospital are here reckoned in the same class, since a Parsi is considered polluted if he has been touched by a white nurse.

When we visited the ghastly place, all was quiet and peaceful; but just as we were going a funeral came slowly up the steps, carrying a bier covered with a white cloth. Only men are allowed to be present. The priests were clad in white mantles, all the rest in black. The mourners walked two and two, holding between them a linen cloth as a sign of sorrow, and fellowship. We quickened our pace to get away, but the last

we saw was the vultures fluttering uneasily from branch to branch, and following the gloomy procession with greedy eyes.

It is not only in Queen's Road that popular types may be studied with advantage; the great bazaars with their endless rows of little low shops, where brisk bargaining is carried on, also offer splendid opportunities for it, and the racecourse a little way out of the town shows a motley and picturesque scene on race-days. During the season all the fashion and elegance of Bombay assembles here twice a week, and the tag-rag and bobtail crowd round the totalisator, equally eager to put on their rupees or to draw their lucky winnings. The races for Arab horses especially attract the most numerous public. On these occasions the sons of the desert impart a more cosmopolitan colour to the scene, as they wander about in ample burnouses, with thick wreaths of plaited camel's hair to secure their fluttering head-cloths—a fine frame for the bearded faces with their deep-set, flashing eyes. Between the races these owners and horse-dealers may often be seen to go aside, fall on their knees, and with their faces turned to Mecca pray for the success of their favourites.

To the tourist who has already been through some of the more remarkable places of Northern India, the city itself offers little of interest in the way of sight-seeing, although the temples and pagodas of at least a dozen different creeds might

be found there, sometimes huddled together in a formless conglomeration, sometimes squeezed and half-hidden between massive business blocks and palatial modern buildings. But on a little rocky island inside the bay is the famous cave temple of Elephanta, which is well worth a visit, even though its reputation is somewhat out of proportion to the reality. The landing is not at all easy on the low stone pier, consisting of nothing but a single row of narrow, square bits of rock about a foot apart; but when you have once got across these stepping-stones dry-shod, you find yourself on a broad new road which extends in long zigzags to the sanctuary. The slopes are clothed with a luxuriant vegetation of tamarinds and mango trees, and the island is said to be full of all kinds of snakes and other reptiles, which however have never been known to hurt a man; this is ascribed by the natives to the influence of the good spirits which have their abode in the temple.

The cave itself, the roof of which is supported by huge columns cut out of the rock, extends a good way into the hill, and consists of a large hall with four smaller chambers adjoining. On the right-hand side stands a simple altar, supporting the sacred Lingam stone, the idol of the temple and the mystic symbol of the god Siva's creative power. The stone is perfectly plain, square at the base, and round at the top. About its foot runs a depression into which to this day the natives

pour oil and grease as a sacrifice to the mighty divinity.

Round the walls may be seen a number of grotesque and very badly preserved sculptures, all derived from the Sivan mythology. An enormous Tri-múrti or three-headed figure of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva—the Hindu Trinity—covers nearly the whole of one wall, with its *dvárpálas* (doorkeepers) on either side. In one corner stands a curious group representing Rávan lying beneath the feet of Siva and of the goddess Párvati. The legend connected with this is so quaint in its simplicity that it seems worth while to give it in a few words.

“After having conquered the god of riches, Rávan, the demon king of Ceylon, journeyed northward to a place called Sharvan. When he had gone half-way up the mountain, on the summit of which Kailas—Siva’s heaven—was situated, his war-chariot suddenly stopped and could proceed no farther. An ape-headed dwarf then appeared and announced that the ascent of the mountain had been made impossible by command of Siva, since the god, with his consort Párvati, was hunting there at the time. Extremely incensed at this, Rávan then threw his many arms round the mountain and shook Siva’s heaven, so that his consort anxiously clung fast to her lord. But the latter, full of holy wrath, pressed down the mountain with his great toe upon Rávan’s arms,

so that they were crushed, and Rávan himself lay beneath the weight for a thousand years, howling so loudly that all creation shook. When that time had come to an end, he appealed to Siva, who then set him free. But ever since this event he has borne the name of Rávan, which comes from *ráv* and means shrieking."

It is not definitely known at what date the temple was excavated. Countless legends are still current among the population of how the work was executed in a single night by five brothers, or how the cave was constructed for a Hindu princess, who had taken a vow of perpetual chastity and wished to pass her life on an uninhabited island; or finally how Alexander the Great was its maker. The latest researches, however, date it to the middle of the eighth century A.D., but who it was that actually carried out the work is still unknown. The name Elephanta is derived from a huge stone elephant which formerly decorated the landing-place, but was removed in the last century to the Victoria Gardens.

Once more—for the last time on this trip—I had a chance of using a rifle. Some miles from Bombay there happens to be a lake, full of crocodiles which, in contrast to so many of their congeners in India, do not enjoy the advantage of being sacred. As the whole water supply of the city is derived from this very lake, one is

obviously performing a useful service in trying to send some of the ugly beasts to happier hunting-grounds. So it was that one scorching forenoon I betook myself to this idyllic spot, situated a good way up among the hills, firmly determined not to return without a "mugger" lashed to the step of the car. I will not weary the reader with another long description of sport, especially as the game in this instance was anything but noble. It is sufficient to say that I alternately rowed and promenaded the banks in the abundant sweat of my face, and that at last after a five hours' search I found my beast, who only yawned once after the shot, never again to close his mouth. But the natives rejoiced on seeing the death of one of their hereditary foes.

And then—a few days later—the whole Indian journey was no more than a memory, and we ourselves were seated on a poor French boat on our way to Colombo, with nothing but sky and sea about us. But when, later in the evening, I took out my diary as usual to make some notes, it was with some hesitation that the pen travelled over the paper. Impressions? Well, that was just the question. Had my dreams and expectations been realised, or was I in fact disappointed? The answer was both yes and no. "Yes" in so far as the details, that is

to say, the many works of art taken by themselves and carefully separated from their surroundings, usually fulfilled or exceeded the ideas I had formed; "no," if I look at the country generally, regarded as a whole. The legend is almost always fairer than the reality, and so it was here. What I missed most of all was the genuine "Indian" atmosphere; instead of it I found nearly everywhere a "Mohammedan-Asiatic" character both in country and people, which I had never expected and which might equally well have belonged to any other part of the world of Islam. The gay, sunny colours which lent such a charm to Burma, for instance, were almost entirely lacking, and a certain oppressive gravity seemed to weigh upon the whole life of the people, a profound, innate, unconscious melancholy. Finally, as regards the landscape, one cannot in general call it anything but horribly ugly; for miles upon miles of plain, often of the nature of desert, where the prevailing colour is grey and where even the sparse vegetation often seems to fall into the same tint, cannot fail to produce a gloomy effect in the end. Of course it will be understood that I am only speaking of those parts of the country I travelled in myself, as the scenery of other regions, such as the extreme north of India and Kashmir, appears to be among the finest in the world.

But in spite of my partial disappointment, I

do not on any account regret having made the journey, for in any case it was interesting, instructive, and amusing. And in order to form a just estimate of things, one must see them for oneself—if possible at close quarters—and not rely entirely upon books and the judgments of others.

CHAPTER XVII

CEYLON

COLOMBO seemed quite familiar when, after a voyage of two days and a half on a wretched old French boat, we anchored once more in its excellent harbour. Five months of ceaseless gadding about from place to place, always receiving new impressions and forming new acquaintances, becomes—paradoxical as the expression may sound—monotonous in the end. It was therefore a real relief to reach for a change a place which we had already visited—though only on the wing—and where at least we should find some familiar faces. This applied particularly to the genial Governor of the island, Sir Henry M'Callum, whose guests we were, and who, together with his extremely amiable wife, took charge of us from the moment of our landing until our voyage was resumed over the Indian Ocean—homewards.

A damp and intense heat drove us out of Colombo as quickly as possible and up into the hills; and as the town itself offers little of interest—besides the motley life of its people and its

numerous jewellers, who do their best to palm off on the inexperienced European their less valuable stones or first-class imitations—we found ourselves the very next morning on the way to the old capital, Kandy.

It was a glorious journey. The railway wound its way up in great curves, now over precipices, now through long tunnels, and from the carriage window we had a most extensive view over the landscape. Everything was intensely green, from the lightest gradations of colour in sunlit spots to the deep shadows of the forests. A luxuriant vegetation clothed the towering hillsides, where small terraces of cultivation lay embedded like the squares of a chess-board among leafy palm-groves and waving bamboo thickets. Here and there endless tea estates stretched across the rising ground with their little round bushes, which bring in the tidy sum of two million pounds a year to the country, or over one-fifth of the total exports of the island. Altogether it seemed as if all the plants and trees of the South had met together in these valleys, as rubber, cotton, bread-fruit, mango, and citron-trees positively disputed the space with all kinds of spices, sugar-canes, lianas, and orchids. It was a confusion of plants and gaudy flowers, in which perhaps the specialist might have found his way, but the layman was hopelessly lost amid hundreds of native names and Latin words. And above

this paradise rose one purple mountain-top after another, hiding its head in thin silvery veils of fleecy sailing cloud, like a monstrous wave breaking into foam. I can by no means agree with Lidner,¹ when he exclaims: "From Nova Zembla's mountains, to Ceylon's scorched valleys . . ." for anything less scorched or any richer vegetation it would be difficult to imagine.

I can very well understand the Arabian legend which placed Paradise in this quarter of the world. The highest mountain in the island, Adam's Peak, still bears the name of the first man, who after his banishment from the Garden of Eden is said to have stood so long up there weeping, that his foot left its print in the rock and his tears filled a miraculous lake at its base. That Ceylon was already known and sought after in a dim antiquity appears from the fact that King Solomon sent his ships to the eastern "Tarshish" to fetch gold and precious stones from its shores, and during the time of the Romans an active trade in pearls was carried on, chiefly through Alexandria. Slowly but surely Buddhism extended its all-embracing arm round the island, and during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries an intimate connection was maintained with Eastern Asia, especially China. It was not till the sixteenth century, however, that Europeans began to cast envious eyes upon the rich island, when in 1505 the Portuguese landed

¹ Benkt Lidner (1757-1793), a well-known Swedish poet.—TR.

near the site of Colombo and began to colonise the district. But the work seems to have gone forward with little energy, and rather more than a hundred years later the colonists had to make way for the Dutch, who by the middle of the seventeenth century subdued the greater part of Ceylon. Their rule lasted till 1796, when England, after her victorious war with the Netherlands, forced the latter to cede the island, which since that time has formed one of the most valuable British colonies in the East. In spite of its proximity to the continent, the country, curiously enough, has nothing to do with India, but in an administrative sense is directly subject to the British Crown. The reason of this was the unfortunate expedition of a subordinate official from Madras, who was sent over to take possession of the island immediately after its annexation. By his brutal want of consideration he brought about a savage revolt of the Kings of Kandy, which nearly cost the English their newly acquired province. Since that time the Indian Government has not been permitted to interfere in the affairs of Ceylon, which are managed direct from home. In order further to impress the natives, the British blasted a great rock asunder in making the road to Kandy, of which block a tradition said that he who could first make his way through it would be master of the island for ever.

The population is in the main divided into two great groups, Tamils and Singhalese. The former,

who have come across the strait from Southern India, are of Dravidian race and number about 800,000 individuals. The latter consist of the descendants of the first civilised settlers in the island, and are in a preponderant majority, about 3,000,000. The Aryans at first called Ceylon Singhala or the Lion Island, whence is derived the name of the race. There are also the "Burghers," descendants of Portuguese and Dutch, who, however, have acquired so dark a hue in course of time that they would scarcely be distinguishable from genuine Singhalese, if one did not know that they bestowed considerably more care on their outward garb than the latter. And finally there still live far up in the hills a few tribes of half-savage negro race, which are asserted to be the last remnant of the aboriginal inhabitants.

On seeing a Singhalese man for the first time, one wonders involuntarily whether he is not a woman. The long hair either hangs in tresses down the back, or else it is carefully plaited and rolled up into a knot at the back of the head, where it is fastened by a huge curved horn comb, stuck in the opposite way to what we are accustomed to. Their costume consists of an ample white jacket and a chequered robe, draped like a skirt about the legs. If it were not for their bearded faces, one would almost fancy that the whole nation was feminised. It cannot be denied that the dress is better suited to the women, who, however, do not

wear the typical comb in their hair, but smarten themselves instead with a piece of simple lace on their linen jackets.

The Tamils as a rule have a better appearance ; their skins are decidedly darker, and the women are fond of adorning themselves with rings and trinkets, which they hang on all possible and impossible parts of the body. The nose and ears are specially favourite places, and about a dozen gold rings often jingle on the lobe of an ear. Some real beauties are to be seen among the young women, but here, as everywhere in the East, good looks are very fleeting and usually vanish entirely in the early twenties. Their children walk about naked as they came into the world, eating sugar-cane roots and playing in the dust of the roads ; the only thing that hides the modesty of the girls is a piece of twine round the hips, on which is hung a little silver heart with quaint inscriptions and charms against evil spirits.

After a railway journey of three solid hours, which, thanks to the constantly changing scenery, did not seem half as long, our party arrived at Kandy between two tropical showers like water-spouts. We then passed a few glorious days in the handsome King's Pavilion, as the Governor's residence is called, enjoying walks and drives in the verdant surroundings, where winding forest roads conduct the rambler from one magnificent view to another. The high mountain air seemed

doubly easy to breathe after the oppressive atmosphere of Colombo, and the evenings were sometimes so cool that summer overcoats had to be pulled out of the bottom of the trunk. It was, I may say, with a certain satisfaction that we ascertained from the guidebook that the sights were few in number, as our appetite for sight-seeing had been thoroughly satisfied in India and we now longed for a few days' well-earned rest.

The little town with its crooked streets running up and down hill offers little of interest, beyond its picturesque situation among the hills. But immediately outside it, on the idyllic Lake of Kandy, lies one of the most holy places of Buddhism, the Dalada Maligawa or Palace of the Tooth. Thousands of pilgrims come here annually to visit the altar of the wonder-working relic and deposit their more or less costly offerings, which may vary from a simple flower to a jewelled work of art, according to the means of the giver. The temple itself consists properly speaking of a number of rather insignificant buildings connected with each other by raised passages and surrounded on all sides by a lofty crenellated wall. Through winding corridors, across paved courtyards and past tumble-down "dagobas," you arrive at last at the holy of holies, a room shrouded in twilight, in which the tooth is kept. Behind a massive iron grille with narrow doors, just wide enough for a man to pass through, a number of valuable objects are exhibited on a

plain wooden table—images of Buddha in crystal and emerald, golden bowls and miniature pagodas studded all over with flashing precious stones. In the middle of all these lies a bright-coloured cushion, from the centre of which rises a lotus-flower made of thin gold-leaf, with a big diamond in the calyx. At the top is fastened a stand in the shape of a figure 8, and in one of the loops is the tooth of the great Teacher. That it really is a tooth may be seen at a glance, but that it never belonged to a human mouth is equally obvious, as its length is about two inches and its thickness that of an ordinary little finger. I certainly entertain the greatest admiration for Buddha, but at the same time I find it difficult to believe that his mouth was as big as this tusk would suggest. It has not yet been discovered from what animal it was taken, but most probably it was from a wild boar or a young hippopotamus.

What is known, however, of the tooth's history is that the original one—which seems to have been a real human tooth—was trebly destroyed in 1560 by the Portuguese, who looked upon the relic as a heathen abomination; first it was ground to powder, then burnt, and finally the ashes were thrown into the sea. But shortly after the priests spread a report that the foreigners had only got hold of an imitation and that the real tooth was still safe. This was then bought for an enormous sum of money by the religious King of Burma; but

hardly was the transaction concluded and the temple of Kandy put on its feet again financially, when its priests declared barefacedly that the treasure they had sold was also false, and that the genuine one had been lying all the time in its old place under lock and key. And there it lies to this day.

It is rarely that visitors are admitted to the holy of holies, and as a rule the tooth is only shown at great festivals. At other times it lies well protected behind its grille and hidden beneath seven bell-shaped covers, one outside another. It was only through the good offices of the British Governor that we were permitted to inspect the remarkable object.

In one corner of the temple buildings is a valuable library, where thousands of old manuscripts in the Pali and Sanskrit languages are preserved. Some of these are written on thin gold plates, but most of them are composed of leaves of the talipot palm, on which the text has been scratched with a sharp point and then filled in with Indian ink. The place assuredly contains countless treasures for the scholar, only waiting to be brought into the light of day.

From the verandah there is an enchanting view of the little Kandy Lake, lying imbedded among verdant hills. In the middle is an island with ruins which are mirrored in the muddy water. When for some reason or other the King wanted to get rid of any of his numerous wives, he always gave

an afternoon tea out there. On the way, however, an "accident" regularly happened, from which, curiously enough, the King always escaped unhurt, while his wives were invariably drowned.

The old royal palace is still in existence, as is also the hall of audience—a very handsome building with rich wood-carvings. But both are greatly profaned, as the latter is used as a court of justice and the former as the residence of the Government Agent.

As the bonzes, in the first place, could not speak foreign languages, and, in the second, never concern themselves with worldly things, we were shown over the temple by two venerable descendants of the old kings of Kandy, who resided there until they were driven out by the English at the beginning of last century. If the dress and appearance of both gentlemen was already in the highest degree original, it became still more so later in the afternoon, when they appeared in full war-paint at a garden-party in the King's Pavilion. Their hats were of silver plate, strongly reminding one of a square pincushion turned upside down, with a little bo-tree in gold at the top. Round their waists immense lengths of linen cloth a yard wide had been wound, increasing the circumference of the wearer by at least fifty per cent. and giving him the profile of a Falstaff; in this way a well and carefully dressed chief wears exactly 68 yards round his waist. In the fold in front, which serves

the purpose of pockets, knives, pens, spectacles and cigarette-cases may be seen sticking out. On the chest hangs a badly ironed dicky, and above that a gold-embroidered jacket with full half-sleeves is worn. The costume is completed by a pair of white pantaloons, which—to be really smart—are trimmed at the foot with a little lace. Besides this, some yards of gold chain are hung about the neck, and all the ten fingers are adorned with enormous rings.

The chiefs got up in this singular fashion—of whom about a dozen were present at the garden-party—were as a rule fine, tall men with long, flowing beards. They are now of little or no importance, and are never permitted to occupy any responsible position ; so that their chief occupation consists in doing nothing at all and swaggering about in their picturesque costumes.

In connection with the tooth I mentioned the impudent fraud committed by the priests on the King of Burma. That they are not to be altogether relied on even in our day is best shown by the following pretty little story, the truth of which is beyond all doubt.

Some years ago there was living at Kandy an English lady of high position, who, to the great disgust of her countrywomen, showed an unusually lively interest in the natives, and was even said to have leanings to the Buddhist religion. She was on particularly friendly terms with the priests of

the Dalada Maligawa temple, associated with them daily, and studied their secluded life.

One evening she invited one of them to her house. The conversation turned on deep religious questions, and appears to have interested both parties to such an extent that the night was far advanced before they had finished. On this account the virtuous bonze was invited to stay and rejoin his brethren at sunrise.

“Unfortunately, ma’am,” he replied, “our strict rules forbid us to sleep under the same roof as a woman, and owing to the prominent position I occupy among the priests, it is of course impossible for me to make an exception.”

After long parleying, however, the holy man agreed at last to sleep in a little bungalow close by, which was only occupied by servants. He gave proof of his great gratitude by running away early the following morning with the white lady’s-maid and taking with him, to be on the safe side, a quantity of money and jewels for the expenses of the journey.

No more was ever heard of the worthy couple, but after this proof of Buddhist piety the English lady seems to have been cured of any ideas of conversion.

One of the most beautiful excursions in the neighbourhood of Kandy is a drive through the great botanical garden at Peradeniya. On roads as smooth as a floor you drive past all that a

tropical flora can show, and there can scarcely be any other place in the world where such a wealth of plants, flowers and fruit is to be seen. Here ferns and orchids flourish, the latter in gay clusters of all the colours of the rainbow. There stand clumps of slender palms with their tops full of coco, areca, and oil nuts, or trees with the most extraordinary fruit, some like wax candles, others like cannon-balls. A confusion of creepers and lianas binds the branches together in an inextricable tangle; lianas whose stems measure 200 yards and more. One of the roads is bordered exclusively with the plants from which all our usual spices are derived: pepper, vanilla, ginger, cardamoms, nutmeg, and all the rest of these culinary secrets which we use every day at home without a thought of what they look like in a growing state. Another runs through an avenue of talipot palms, the leaves and fruit of which are used by the natives in as many different ways as there are days in the year; the tree reaches the age of fifty or sixty years before blooming with a single huge cluster of creamy white flowers, after which effort it usually dies. Everywhere are clumps of giant bamboo, that cane which reaches a height of 120 feet and which one can literally *see* growing, as during the rains it increases its height by a foot a day, when the plant is at its strongest. Sacred bo-trees stretch their gnarled branches to the sky, under the shade of which perhaps a panama-hat plant or a "dumb

cane" may flourish, so called because a drop of its poisonous sap on the tongue deprives a man for a few days of the power of speech. In a word, every imaginable curiosity the vegetable world has to show seems to be collected on this fertile soil, and a passionate botanist would have been in raptures. As for me, I looked at the gardens with unfeigned admiration, paying more attention to the glowing colours and the play of light and shade among the foliage than to all the names and curious information which one of the directors poured into my ears. And therefore I will spare the reader any further description of Peradeniya, as it would simply fill a volume with Latin words.

But the days flew quickly by in the cool hill town, and it was soon time to pack up and go back to the oppressive heat of Colombo. And hot it was with a vengeance! One's thin silk clothing positively burned one's body, and if it had been possible, one would certainly have crawled out of one's skin to get rid of all encumbrance. The thermometer obstinately stood at 95° at midnight, and sleep gave way to an abnormally prolonged Turkish bath. I could not help casting some reflections upon all the puffing and blowing we hear at home, when a so-called heat wave sweeps for a few days over our usually chilly land, and people think it "unbearable" as soon as the temperature goes to a little over 70° in the shade.

But our torment lasted no more than twenty-

four hours, as after that time we said goodbye not only to Colombo and Ceylon, but to the whole Orient. Our journey had reached its last phase of all, for we were homeward bound on the *Kleist's* sister ship, the *Yorck*, away from the burning sun and rich colours of the tropics and back to the greyer skies and more familiar surroundings of honest old Europe.

There is no need to waste many words on this voyage. It is enough to say that a case of small-pox caused for a few days some agitation on board, until the poor patient was duly landed at Aden and cared for by the self-sacrificing Catholic sisters, in whose charge she died a few days later. Meanwhile we continued our voyage westward, while the temperature steadily fell till at Naples it reached 46°, with a violent storm lashing the rain against the port-holes. The sudden change made the cold feel doubly sharp ; if it had not been for the smoking top of Vesuvius one would have fancied oneself at the North Pole.

On April 16—just five and a half months from our departure—we again entered the harbour of Genoa, spent a short time acclimatising and civilising ourselves on the Riviera, and returned at the end of the month to find the Swedish capital shrouded in a heavy fall of snow.

The journey to the East was over. All that was left was a host of bright and interesting

memories, rich in impressions and full of gratitude to the world which has so many marvellous things to show. And to keep these memories from fading, this book has been written. If in addition it has succeeded in engaging the reader's interest for a while and perhaps even awakening a desire to become more closely acquainted with the rich countries of the dawn, it will have fulfilled in a twofold measure its modest aim.

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